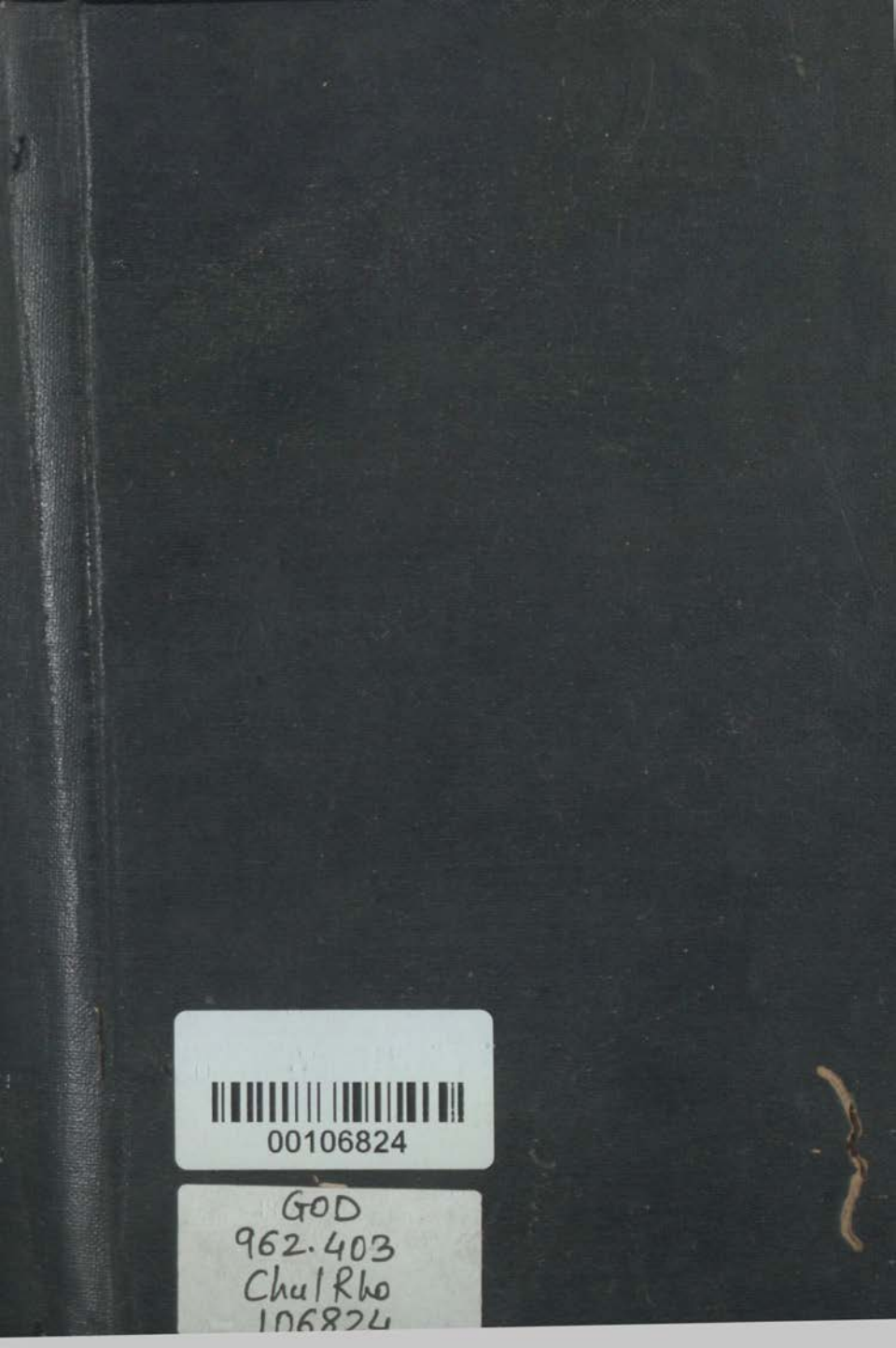
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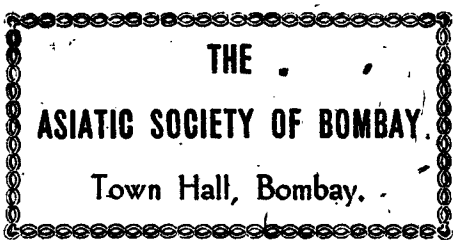

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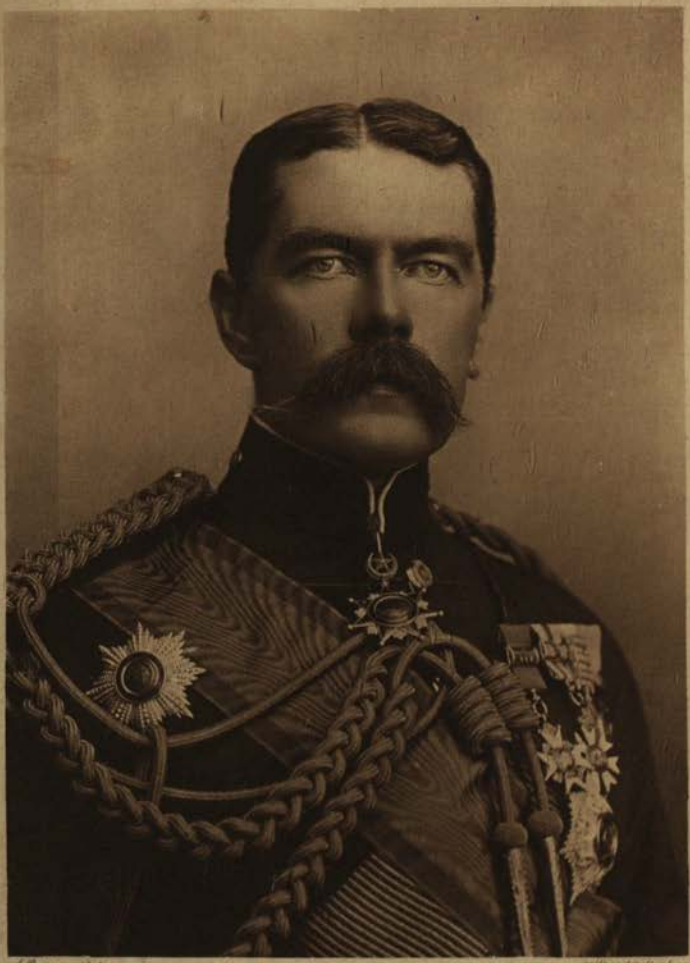

A. Bassano photo. Willard Hollis photo.

Kitchener of Khartoum

THE RIVER WAR

AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF

THE RECONQUEST OF THE SOUDAN

B1233

BY

WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL

AUTHOR OF 'THE STORY OF THE MALAKAND FIELD FORCE, 1897'

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Illustrated by Angus McNeill, Seaforth Highlanders

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IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME II.

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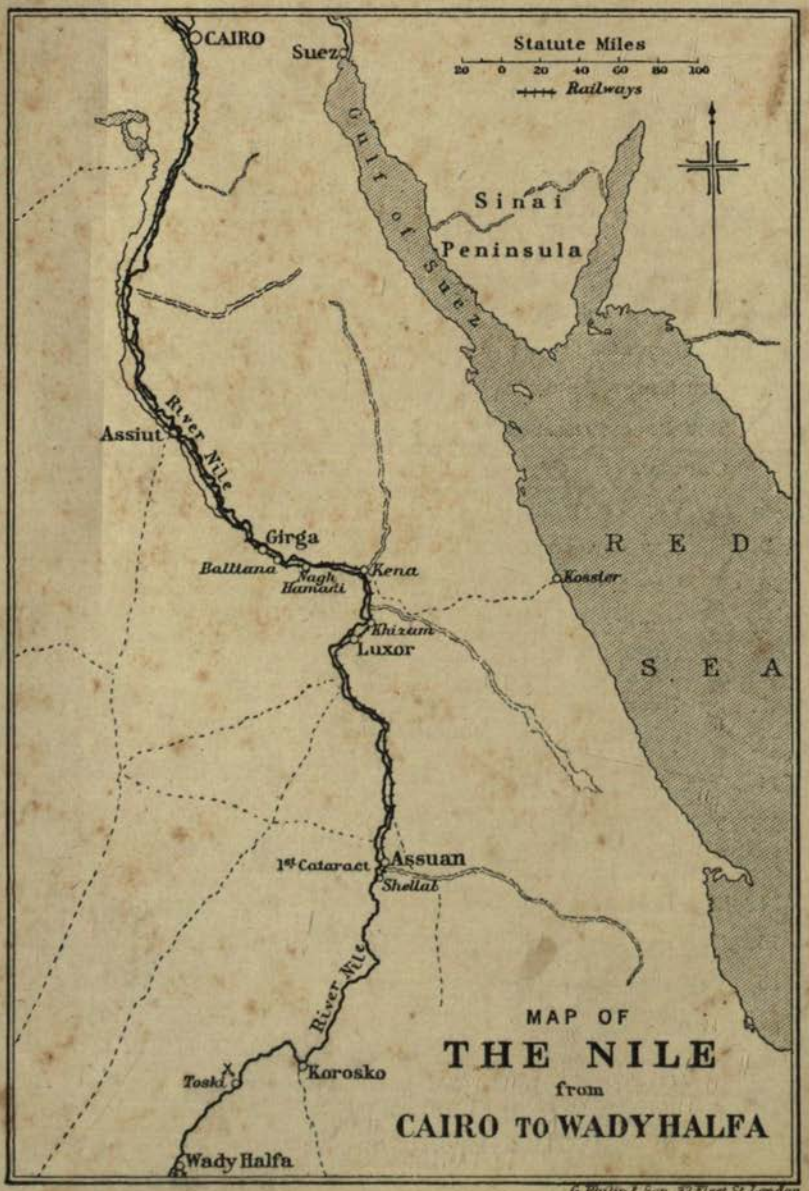
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THE NILE
from
CAIRO TO WADY HALFA
G. Philip & Son, 32 Fleet St. London

THE RIVER WAR

CHAPTER XV

UP THE RIVER WITH THE 21st LANCERS

A change of style — Final preparations — Alexandria—Movements of troops — The 21st Lancers leave Cairo — Cavalry transport — The Philistine—Shellal—The reservoirs—The wealth of Egypt—A vital necessity—The advantages of irrigation—The financial aspect—Cassel's scheme—The dam at Assuan—The Temple of Philæ—A human sacrifice—Stern-wheelers—The gloomy valley—Wady Halfa—On the Desert Railway—'The Atbara'—Harmony Row—The enterprising Greek—The beginning of the game.

WHOSOEVER has persevered thus far in the account of the River War will have formed a decided opinion. Either his interest has been excited, or his dislike. He cannot have remained indifferent, or he would long ago have thrown the book aside with a weary sigh. If he be pleased, and think his hours profitably spent, he will forgive some relaxation of the severe and formal tone in which the tale has hitherto been told, and will allow me to adopt a more familiar style. He will consent with greater willingness, since many incidents and details which history must perforce disdain, yet which are of interest and value, are within the wider range of personal narrative. He may even, like the sculptor, who averts his eyes from the cold and lifeless chastity

of the splendid statue to rest them on the less classic though more alluring beauties of the model, experience a feeling of human satisfaction. Besides, I will pledge him that, if the account become more lively, it shall not be less exact. Thus far, he has watched the drama from the auditorium. Now he is invited to step on to the stage and take an actor's interest in the final scenes. If, on the other hand, the story and the manner of its telling has aroused his hostility, I fear lest he may have read so many pages against his inclinations, only with the malevolent design of assailing me with taunting words. If this unhappily be true, and he has been willing to suffer himself that he may make another suffer, he shall have no apology from me. I rejoice to reciprocate his detestation. A bad man's dislike is but a doubtful evil; the dislike of a bad man only a venial crime. It is with the amiable reader that I am concerned.

All through the early months of the summer, while the British brigade was sweltering among the sand dunes of Darmali, the preparations for the final advance were steadily proceeding. A second British brigade was ordered to the Soudan. A new battery of Howitzer artillery, the 37th, firing enormous shells charged with Lyddite, was despatched from England. Two large 40-pounder guns were sent from Cairo. Another British Maxim battery of four guns was formed in Cairo from men of the Royal Irish Fusileers. Three new screw gunboats of the largest size and most formidable pattern had been passed over the indefatigable railway in sections, and were now launched on the clear waterway south of the Atbara encampment. The

number of medical officers with the Expeditionary Force was largely increased, and the supply of hospital stores and appliances augmented. A large and energetic body of war correspondents set out for the scene of action,[1] and last, though not least, a British cavalry regiment was ordered up the Nile.

Amid these excitements I returned from India to England, and forthwith proceeded to the War Office to ask for employment. My application, though perhaps presumptuous, was by no means singular, and I found that several hundred other officers had been on a similar errand. Success, however, rewarded perseverance. I was attached for duty during the campaign to the 21st Lancers, and instructed to make my way to Egypt without delay. This I accordingly proceeded to do, and as the voyage was unmarked by incident or accident, the sea smooth, the food indifferent, and the passengers unexceptionable, the reader may dispense with the account. Yet, since the traveller should always preserve the fruit of his experiences for the benefit of others, it may be right to observe that of the three most usual routes to Egypt—*via* Marseilles by 'Messageries Maritimes,' *via* Brindisi by 'P. and O.,' and *via* Trieste by 'Austrian Lloyd'—the first is the most salubrious, the second the most speedy, and the last by far the most comfortable.

[1] Including, among others, Col. Frank Rhodes (*Times*), the Hon. H. Howard (*Times*), Messrs. Fred Villiers (*Globe* and *Illustrated London News*), Charles Williams (*Daily Chronicle*), Frank Scudamore (*Daily News*), Hamilton Weldon (*Morning Post*), Bennett Burleigh (*Daily Telegraph*), W. T. Maud (*Graphic*), René Bull (*Black and White*), W. Maxwell (*Standard*), G. W. Steevens (*Daily Mail*), and Lionel James (*Reuter's Agency*).

Alexandria was full of the rumours of war. The hotel was enlivened by the presence of officers—some belonging to regiments, but mostly departmental—who were either about to proceed south or hoping that they were soon to be ordered thither. In these days, when British wars are not sufficiently dangerous to be terrible, there are as many mournful spectacles at the base as at the front. Disconsolate young gentlemen endeavouring to fight their country's battles disguised as journalists; officers who have been found medically unfit, and vainly hope to be allowed to go back to their regiments after all; some for whom there is no room; others whose services are necessary at the base; anxious wives who wish their husbands were safely back; ambitious wives who wish their husbands employed; such is the unregarded overflow at the head of the channel of communications.

On reaching Cairo it was evident that it had been wise to hurry on the road. Most of the troops had already been despatched. The squadron of Lancers to which I found myself attached, was to start the very next day. I will not be wearisome by quoting the time table. It is, however, necessary to relate the departures of the different units on their long journey to the point of concentration on the Atbara. On successive days, beginning on the 29th of July, the regiments—by half-battalions, batteries, and squadrons—left Cairo in the following order:—Rifle Brigade, 32nd Field Battery, Grenadier Guards, Howitzer and Maxim batteries, 5th Fusileers, 21st Lancers by squadrons, Lancashire Fusileers. The journey occupied eleven days, and the last of the force would reach the Atbara by the 18th of

August. Before the construction of the Desert Railway this movement of troops could not possibly have been carried out in less than four months.

The reader is acquainted with the line of communications, having studied it in the previous campaigns. Yet I shall ask him to accompany in imagination the squadron whose ranks will henceforward be the standpoint from which he will view the operations.

On the 2nd of August we paraded in the panoply of modern war—*khaki* uniforms, sun-helmets, 'Sam Brown' belts, revolvers, field-glasses, and Stohwasser gaiters—at Abbasiya barracks. The railway runs conveniently by the cavalry lines, and a long train of carriages for the men and of cattle trucks for the horses was waiting. The entraining of troops is always a wearying affair. The soldiers—arrayed in what they call 'Christmas Tree order,' and dangling from every part of their bodies with water-bottles, havresacks, canteen-straps, cloaks, swords, and carbines clank awkwardly into the carriages. Then the baggage has to be loaded, kit-bags must be stowed, and provision made for food and filtered water. With infantry the business is laborious; but with cavalry the difficulties are more than doubled. Saddlery, forage, and above all horses, have to be packed into the trucks. When I mention that the horses were stallion Arabs, it will easily be realised what a kicking and squealing the stowage of this last item caused. But perseverance overcomes everything, even the vivacity of the little Arab horse, though at times he seems to be actually infected with the fanaticism of the human inhabitants

of the land of his birth. At length all things are accomplished. The band strikes up 'Auld Lang Syne.' For a moment the train is linked to the platform by the handshaking of those who go and of those who stay. Then it slowly moves off, gaining pace and increasing the distance gradually, until its growing rattle drowns the cheering and the fitful strains of the band. We are off. Whither? Southward to Khartoum and perhaps beyond—perhaps very far beyond for some.

The journey from Cairo to the Atbara camp divides itself naturally into four stages, through all of which the troops must toil. We need not drag onward as slowly. We may fly airily along the miles and pause only where there is something to look at or something to discuss. Twenty-four hours from Cairo by train the first halt is reached—Khizam.* Here we are on the Nile. The railway is left, and progress is by steamer. One was already waiting. The versatile and ubiquitous Cook had undertaken the arrangements, as his name painted on everything clearly showed. The horses had to be moved from the trucks and persuaded, in spite of their protests, to enter two great barges. On these they were tightly packed—so tightly, indeed, that they could not kick, and biting was the sole expression they could give to their feelings. The baggage was then shipped, and when this task was finished the steamer took the barges in tow, and pushing out into the stream began its journey to Assuan. The barges were heavy, the currents adverse, and hence the progress was slow and tedious. At times, getting into slack

* Map, 'The Nile from Cairo to Wady Halfa,' to face page 1.

water, we made nearly four miles an hour; at others the speed diminished to about two, and on one occasion, in a narrow place, the steamer had only about half a mile an hour the best of it. Had the stream been a little stronger, progress would have ceased altogether. Still the voyage, though slow, was comfortable and the nights cool. Indeed, even the days were not oppressive,

EMBARKING TRANSPORT MULES

and the horrors of war were represented merely by the food, the original plainness of which was not improved by the misdirected efforts of the cook.

For four days and four nights the steamer plodded up the Nile. At Luxor we stopped for a couple of hours, almost moored to the temple. I paid it a flying visit. Something in the strange shapes of the great pillars

appeals to the human love of the mystical. It requires no effort of imagination to roof the temple and fill its great hall with the awe-struck worshippers, or to occupy the odd, nameless chambers at the far end with the powerful priests who crushed the body and soul out of ancient Egypt. Now that the roof is off and the sun shines into all the nooks and corners, we may admire the beauty of the work without fearing its evil purposes. It is also a favourite place for tourists to be photographed in. The science and the triumph of the living century are displayed in vivid contrast with the art and repose of the century long dead. We are reminded of the bright butterfly on the tomb. The truth of the simile, however, vanishes when the photographs of the tourists are proudly shown by the local photographer. We were not without Philistines on board.

'Have you been to see the temple?' I asked an officer. 'No, certainly not; supposing I am killed, I shall have dragged all round there for nothing.'

We reached Assuan at last, and the business of disembarkation began again. The First Cataract of the Nile opposed the further passage of the original steamer; but above the rapids another waited. From Assuan to Shellal is a march of six miles. The horses, delighted to stretch their limbs, enjoyed themselves. The heat and the dust moderated the enthusiasm of their riders. The baggage went by train, with a sufficient escort.

The scene when we arrived at Shellal was indeed strange. In the foreground, under the shade of the palm-trees, whose sombre tints were brightened by

the glow of the evening sun, lay the fresh steamers which were to carry us to Wady Halfa. The shore was lined with barges and *gyassas*. On the banks piles of military stores were accumulated. Great stacks of shovels, of small-arm ammunition in boxes with red labels, of Maxim-gun ammunition in boxes painted green, of medical stores, of all the varied necessaries of an army, rose on every side. The train which had conveyed us from Assuan drew up in the midst of this. An array of coolies and of convicts—of the same appearance as the coolies, but for heavy chains on their legs—was drawn up to assist the soldiers in unloading the trucks and loading the boats. The work began. The spectacle, so far as the foreground was concerned, was one of singular animation. Blue-clothed brown men and brown-clad white men bustled about in a busy whirlpool. Whistles blew, trumpets sounded, the horses fought and squealed, officers shouted: and behind, among the dark rocks of the river gorge, the broken pillars and walls of the Temple of Philæ were outlined against the sunset sky. The past looked down on the present, and, offended by its exuberant vitality, seemed grimly to repeat the last taunt that age can fling at youth: 'You will be as I am one of these days.'

I viewed the celebrated ruins of the temple with an hostility so keen that I am provoked to a long digression. Assuan is the site of the southern reservoir of the great irrigation works now under construction, and which, when completed, are to supply with abundant and perennial water all the

land from Assiut to the Mediterranean. It is on this irrigation system that Egypt must depend for the revenue to develope the Soudan. Without the sure hope of the increase of prosperity which will be derived from this tremendous enterprise, the reconquest of the lost provinces would never have been undertaken. The reservoirs are therefore essential to the military operations; and the fact—that the Nile which carried and sustained the army will by these means be actually enabled to pay for the campaigns which it alone rendered necessary and possible—affords another reason for the title of 'The River War.'

The wealth of Egypt depends on water. The Nile flows through the desert. Spread the water on the land, and the desert will immediately pay a bountiful return annually. There is a mighty volume of water and a vast expanse of desert. To join the two in fruitful union is the function of the dams; the greater the scale of irrigation, the greater the increase of wealth. The varying flow of the Nile—at times a vast flood rushing wastefully to the sea, at times a comparative trickle winding through the thirsty land—has been the great difficulty with which Egyptian engineers, from the earliest dynasties, have been confronted. To build reservoirs—which, by storing the excess of the autumn to supply the scarcity of the summer, would regulate the flow of the river to an even volume, and thus at all times assure the industrious peasant of the fruits of his toil—was a prospect which had long glittered before the eyes of every thoughtful man who lived in the Delta. In recent years the need of a certain summer supply of

water has become imperative. The area under cotton and sugar-cane in Egypt has grown from 1,000,000 acres in 1883 to 1,700,000 acres in 1899. The steady increase of these two valuable crops depends entirely on the summer supply of the Nile. The cotton and sugar-cane crops of 1883 required 9,000 cubic feet per second; those of 1899 demand 15,000 cubic feet per second. Now in 1878 the whole summer supply of the Nile caught by the existing irrigation works was only 7,000 cubic feet per second; it was 8,000 cubic feet in 1889; in 1890 it was 9,000 cubic feet, and in 1892 it was 10,000 cubic feet per second. These discharges are hopelessly inadequate for the increased summer crops. Since 1893 the summer supply of the river has been exceptionally good. But it is certain that the poor years will return—have, indeed, already returned—and with them the most terrible loss of wealth and even of life. The vital necessity of protecting the summer crops drove the irrigation question into the first place.

A practical plan was produced by the engineers. Two great dams, three locks, a regulating canal, and subsidiary works were to be constructed at a cost of £E2,000,000.[2] The amount of water stored would be distributed as shown on the following page.

[2] The works which were proposed, and their respective estimated cost, were as follows:

1. Assuan dam and lock	£E1,400,000
2. Assiut dam and lock	425,000
3. Ibrahimia canal, regulator, and lock	83,000
4. Land and subsidiary works	49,000
5. Customs duty on water and plant	41,000
Total	£E1,998,000

To Upper Egypt	170,000,000 cubic mètres
„ Middle Egypt	510,000,000 „
„ Lower Egypt	300,000,000 „
„ The Ghiza Province	85,000,000 „

Making a total of 1,065,000,000 cubic mètres

In return for this, these regions would, on the lowest computation and within an incredibly short time of the good gift, grow richer by the following yearly income :—

Upper Egypt	by £E420,000
Middle Egypt	„ 1,176,000
Lower Egypt	„ 600,000
and the Ghiza Province	„ 212,000

Making a total benefit of £E2,408,000 a year

Besides this, the certainty that the cotton crop would not be injured by drought has been calculated as worth £200,000 a year, thus raising the grand total of the increased riches of the Egyptian people to £2,608,000 a year. From this augmentation of wealth the Government would every year derive a proportionate increase of revenue from

Upper Egypt	of £E63,000
Middle Egypt	„ 198,400
Lower Egypt	„ 85,200
and from the Ghiza Province	„ 31,800

Making a total of £E378,400

Beyond and above this increase of revenue, there would be an acquisition of capital. The amount of water stored would enable 102,000 acres of waste land now in the possession of the Government to be reclaimed and rendered fertile. 'The rate of £E10 per acre for land with good drainage and an assured water-supply in summer is not at all high. There should, then,

eventually result from the sale of these reclaimed tracts a total capital sum of £E1,020,000. It is true that land reclamation is a very slow process, and that these sales will probably extend over a considerable number of years; but there is no doubt that in time the whole area will be sold.'[3]

The direct accession of wealth to the mass of the nation at once enlarges all branches of the public revenue, and the Egyptian Government shrewdly anticipates a considerable increase of receipts both from Customs and State railways as a consequence of the Nile dams. But this advantage is beyond the grasp of practical calculations. The profits from the investment of two millions in irrigation are, however, shown to be rather more than two and a half millions, or approximately 125 per cent. per annum, with an additional bonus of one million spread over, let us say, the first fifty years.

Such was the bright promise, and it was not wonderful that the Administrators embraced it with delight. The Egyptian Government were offered what was upon the whole the best investment in all history. Occasionally gold mines have yielded profits as high. None have ever paid on such a scale. All have been precarious properties. Seams and pockets become exhausted; but the Nile flows on for ever. Everyone was eager to carry the enterprise forward. Serious difficulties, however, interposed.

The financial position of Egypt again obtrudes itself. The Government required two millions. They

[3] Report by Sir Elwin Palmer.

could not raise such a sum by taxation. They were prohibited by the authority of the Caisse de la Dette from contracting a loan. They could not save out of revenue in order to pay by instalments, until that revenue was increased by the improved irrigation. The deadlock was complete. The dams could not be built without the money. The money could not be obtained without the dams. This apparently insuperable difficulty had for several years prevented the undertaking, had kept the whole scheme nebulous, and had withheld from Egypt the extraordinary advantages which were promised. In 1893 Sir Alfred Milner wrote: 'The creation of a reservoir is indeed the burning question of Egyptian irrigation at the present day.'[4] He then proceeded to discuss the financial obstacles, but was unable to make any better suggestion for overcoming these than that, as England had profited greatly by the Suez Canal shares, it 'would not be a very enormous sacrifice or a very extraordinary act of generosity,' if she were to make Egypt a present of the money needed for the reservoirs. This might be magnificent, but it was not business; and successive Chancellors of the Exchequer had remained impassive in spite of the eloquent appeal.

So the affair dragged, and Egypt thirsted until the year 1897. The expenses of the Soudan campaign, and the prospect of the heavy charge on Egypt which would be involved by the developement of the territories soon to be re-conquered, compelled the Government to appeal to private enterprise. Several great capitalists

[4] *England in Egypt*, p. 315.

were approached. They considered the question. They reflected that Egypt was prohibited from contracting a loan, and unable to pay anything for five years. In five years much might happen; Omdurman had not then been fought; Fashoda was as yet only the name of a swamp. It did not seem possible to evade the restrictions of the Caisse in view of the fact that French influence might at some future date be paramount in Egypt. So they all declined, and again the project languished. At length the embarrassed Government turned to Ernest Cassel and invited him to come to Egypt. Long consultations followed, and after much inquiry Cassel formulated his well-known scheme.

However impatient the reader may be to return to the seat of the war, he will do well to tarry a little longer near the site of the Great Reservoir. Besides, the cavalry squadron is embarking its horses and baggage, and there is plenty of time. They shall not start without him. Let me briefly explain the financial scheme.

Cassel said to the Government: 'You shall acquire your reservoirs on the instalment system. Make your contracts for the dams. Begin the work forthwith. Pay your contractors, not with money, but with promissory notes. As the construction progresses, and the money is needed, so you shall issue these promissory notes or "pay-warrants." I and my friends undertake to cash them at sight. Five years hence you shall begin to repay us, or those to whom we have passed on the "pay-warrants," by sixty half-yearly instalments,

commencing July 1, 1903. Thus you will obtain your reservoirs. You will not have to pay anything for five years. You will, it is true, be incurring indebtedness, but you will not have to contract a loan. In thirty years, by a charge which you can meet easily out of your dam-fed revenue, you will be quit of all liability, and your reservoirs will be your own.'

It will be evident that, from the investors' point of view, the vital part of the scheme was the form in which the 'pay-warrants' which were to be introduced into the market were drawn up. This is not, however, the place for their full text. Their effect, briefly stated, is is to give the holders a lien on the reservoirs, subject to the right and obligation of the Egyptian Government to take possession of them by paying a fixed price within a fixed period.

The actual plan, which was in accurate and legal expression as complicated as I have tried to make its explanation simple, was hailed with delight by the Administrators, and immediately adopted. In 1898 Cassel formed the 'Irrigation Investment Corporation,' and entered into an agreement with the contractors, Messrs. John Aird & Co., to purchase from them the whole of the issued 'pay-warrants,' which, spread over the thirty-five years to elapse before their complete redemption by the Egyptian Government, amounted to £4,716,780.[5] The construction of the reservoirs was then immediately begun.

[5] It will be noticed that the amount of 'pay-warrants' to be issued is more than twice as large as the amount actually needed for the construction. The difference, of course, arises from the fact that no interest is paid for five years, and that the capital is repaid only within thirty years.

To completely understand the details of the scheme, it is necessary to see them at work. The contractors require money. The Government pays them by 'pay-warrants' of the prescribed form, which are cashed by the Irrigation Corporation, placed by that Corporation in trust at the Bank of England, and sold to the public in the form of Trust Certificates as may become necessary.

The enterprise proceeded. The certificates representing the 'pay-warrants,' as they were issued by the Bank of England, were eagerly bought by the public. The amount required for the first issue was within a few hours subscribed several times over. The substantial profits which usually accrue to those who direct the greater evolutions of capital were not the only reward of the wise and ingenious financier; and the rank of Grand Officer of the Mejidie and the degree of knighthood which were conferred upon Ernest Cassel are not the least deserved of the many honours won 'up the river.'

The dams will therefore be built. That at Assuan is the more interesting. A massive wall of granite masonry in the ancient Egyptian style, one mile and a quarter long, twenty-four feet broad at the top, one hundred feet thick at the bottom, and holding up one hundred feet of water in the deepest channel, will run from bank to bank. When the Nile is in full flood the sluice-gates will be open, and the red water of the river will rush roaring through 200 culverts twenty-four feet high and six and a half feet broad. When the violence of the flood has passed and the compara-

tively clear water of the winter is flowing, the sluice-gates will be gradually lowered and the reservoir slowly filled, until an enormous volume of water is pent in the dark gorges above Assuan and the river for more than a hundred miles up stream has become a vast lake, from which the summer supply will be maintained. By these operations the annual income of Egypt will be increased by more than two and a half millions and the revenue by nearly £400,000. I approach the temple of Philæ. All the foregoing remarks are based upon the consideration that the reservoirs are to hold 1,065 million cubic mètres of water. If the Assuan dam were raised eight mètres, which would be possible at a comparatively small cost, instead of storing 1,065 million it would store 2,550 million cubic mètres of water; that is to say, more than twice as much. The profits of the people and Government of Egypt would be more than doubled. The wealth and happiness of the amiable peasants of the Delta would grow; their contentment would react on the prosperity of other countries. All the world would gain advantage from those extra eight mètres of masonry.

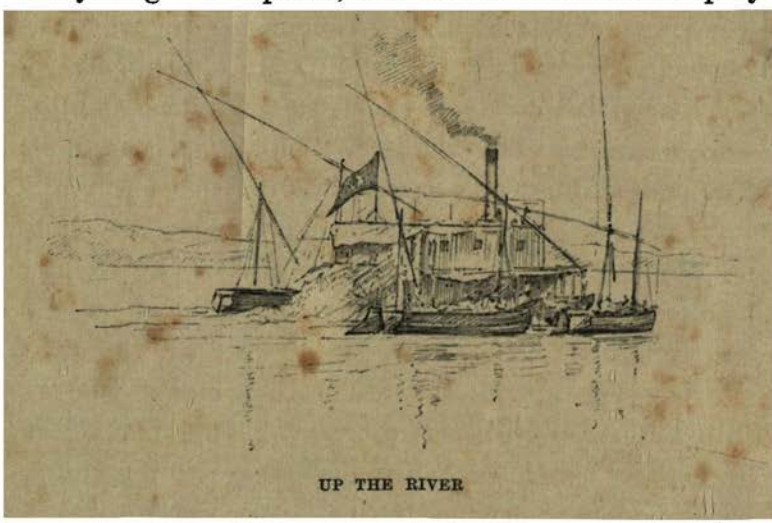
The Temple of Philæ intervenes. The raising of the water-level would submerge it. I will not assail the small but beautiful ruin. Let us believe that the god to whom it was raised was once worthy of human reverence, and would willingly accept as a nobler memorial the life-giving lake beneath which his temple would be buried. If it were not so, then indeed it would be time for a rational and utilitarian generation

to tear the monument of such a monster to pieces, so that no stone remained upon the other, and thus prevent for ever the sacrifice of 1,485 million cubic mètres of water—the most cruel, most wicked, and most senseless sacrifice ever offered on the altar of a false religion. But the quarrel of the philosopher is not with the temple. Behind it stand the archæologists. Because a few persons whose functions are far removed from those which may benefit mankind—profitless chippers of stone, rummagers in the dust-heaps of the past—have raised an outcry, nominally on account of the tourists, the sacrifice of water—the life-blood of Egypt—is being offered up. The State must struggle and the people starve, in order that professors may exult and tourists find some space on which to scratch their names. Let us return to the cavalry squadron—into the real world of honest effort and common-sense.

The work of loading passed the hours away, and we did not start till dusk. The steamers on this reach of the river are much smaller than those lower down. To convey the squadron of cavalry two were provided. Two *gyassas* and a barge, all full of horses, were lashed to the sides of each of these, and thus, four boats abreast, we moved slowly up the river. The white steamer between the boats and barges suggested a tall soldier with three somewhat disorderly women hanging on his arms. The effect was increased when one of the *gyassas* put up a great white sail, like an enormous feather sticking out of a bonnet.

The steamers themselves are worth looking at.

They draw only a few inches of water. Their boilers are in the bows, and a steam-pipe carries the power to a cylinder on either side of the quarter. The pistons from these cylinders turn a great paddle-wheel which protrudes from the stern. The appearance is peculiar. The red blades of the wheel only dip about eight inches in the water, and splash it brown and thick over the whole of the stern. The machinery—wheels, cranks, pistons, everything—is exposed, and is so drenched with spray



UP THE RIVER

that I wonder it does not all become rusty. On the roof is an awning, and beneath this the officers lie during the heat of the day and the warmth of the night.

Above Assuan the character of the river is changed. The belt of cultivation which bordered the lower reach has dwindled to a mere strip of green, varying from ten to a hundred yards in breadth, and often broken by long intervals of barrenness. The

channel itself is narrower, and consequently deeper. Few sandbanks are to be seen. Rock, indeed, is the characteristic of this stage of the journey. The gorge which the great river has laboriously cut is dark and deep. The walls of black rock on either side are heaped with stone *débris* and marked clearly by the action of the water. The sombre appearance harmonises with the sad colour of the muddy water, and is relieved only by the bright-coloured sand. It is impossible not to realise the desolation of the scene—not a tree, not a shrub, not a blade of grass brightens the ragged amorphous summits of the hills, and he would soon be a hot and hungry man who should wander on these forsaken peaks.

Here and there along the banks are villages hardly distinguishable from the rocks on and of which their poor, miserable houses are built. Still they contain inhabitants. Little, black, naked children run down to the water's edge to wail 'Backsheesh!' at the passing steamers mournfully, as if they knew beforehand they would get nothing. Their elders stand in blue and white clothes further off, or sit on donkeys gazing dully at the crowded boats. I marvelled how these people live. Their apparent property consists of forty or fifty date-palms, perhaps an acre of Indian corn, and the water-wheel, without which nothing would be possible. As the banks here are higher than those below, this last is of more elaborate construction than the simple lever and counterpoise arrangement which punctuates the miles from Cairo to Assuan. There is a sort of stone tower, in which two

lean bullocks circle slowly and unwillingly, turning a horizontal wheel. This wheel, by means of cogs, turns a vertical wheel, the bottom of which dips in the river. Round the vertical wheel is an endless chain of earthenware pots. When the oxen march forward both wheels revolve, the pots dip in the water, are filled, are carried upwards and around, and empty their contents into a wooden pipe. Thus, to the droning hum of the machinery, a continual stream of water flows to the thirsty sand, and such is the power of this wonderful water that the sand forthwith bursts into a crop. The device is ingenious, its aspect not unpicturesque; for, to complete the scene, we must add the date-palms, which rise in a row from the river's brink and cluster thickly round the vivifying wheel.

There is one other sign of life, and it is a sign of the busy life that belongs to a civilised age. Along the bank of the river runs the telegraph-wire. Looking at the slender poles and white insulators—for the wire itself is invisible against the background of rock—it is impossible not to experience a glow of confidence in the power of science, which can thus link the most desolate regions of the earth with its greatest city and keep the modern pioneer ever within hail of home. The wire suggested another reflection. Nor was I the only one who wondered what news that thread of instant communication would presently carry back to England—whether of success or failure, of advance or retreat, or whose names it would flash homeward as being of no more account to living men.

All this time the steamer was toiling up the strong

stream, making at the best three miles an hour, and on some occasions scarcely able to hold its own against the current. But though our progress was slow it was continuous, and on the 12th we disembarked at Wady Halfa, and packed the baggage and horses into the trucks of the military railway. The distance from Halfa to Rail-head at the Atbara is nearly 400 miles. The train accomplishes this in about thirty-six hours. It is an unpretentious-looking train, but though neither paint nor padding adorns its carriages, it is not uncomfortable. A long horse-truck was provided for the officers, and others for the men. A roof of odd pieces of board protects the occupants from the sun. A canvas blind hanging all round excludes some of the dust. In the middle of the carriage stands a large earthenware filter full of water, agreeably cooled by the evaporation. We started the same night that we landed, and when it became daylight were in mid-desert. The full force of that abomination of desolation smote one when the landscape was surveyed through a hole in the canvas blind. The mirages alone give relief to the picture—the relief that salt water would give to a thirsty castaway. I was chiefly impressed with their number. Never was optical illusion so cheap. Wherever the eye might wander, the mocking shimmer of unreal waters deceived and tantalised. The traveller turned with eagerness to the earthenware filter, and, drinking deep, thanked Heaven that Nature is not often swayed by the spiteful, mischievous imp who prompted such a grim joke.

The whole countenance of the land is terrible. As

wide as the sea, it is less hospitable, and has all its barrenness without any of its beauty. The train plods wearily, making about ten miles an hour, along an apparently endless track. Nothing varies the monotony of the scene. The telegraph-posts are the most enlivening feature. Mile after mile slips by, and they are all the same. Hour after hour passes, and all are hot. At intervals we stopped at stations distinguished only by numbers and consisting of a wooden hut and a signal-post. All day long we travelled in these unpropitious lands, without a sample of which no well-regulated Inferno would be complete, and with the evening reached Abu Hamed. Scarcely a year before an armed patrol mounted on swift camels might have approached the walls, only to turn and gallop away amid the whistle of pursuing bullets. Now the train steamed into the station, and the engine, uncoupling, moved off towards an engine-house, whence a fresh locomotive was already approaching. Civilised man can accomplish a great deal in a very short time if he takes off his coat to the work. We paid the tribute of recollection to the gallant officers whose white crosses in the burying-ground commemorate at once their conquest and their death, and then slept while the train, during the hot hours of the night, hurried on through Berber and Darmali to the camp of the Atbara.

The railway runs right to the end of the tongue of land which lies between the north side of the Atbara river and the east bank of the Nile. At the end of the line was a huge depôt. Mounds and ridges of biscuit

boxes, of ammunition boxes, and of stores of all kinds filled a space of many acres. Three months' supplies for all troops south of this point had been accumulated. This great reserve secured the army against the most unlikely contingencies. Suppose a repulse had been sustained in front of Omdurman, suppose that the Arab tribes all along the attenuated line of communication were to have risen, suppose even that a foreign force occupied Egypt, the army on the Upper Nile would still be a factor to be reckoned with; might return to the north; might strike east to the Red Sea and Suakin, or south-east to Kassala; and would in any case have time to look about for an object of attack or a loophole of escape.

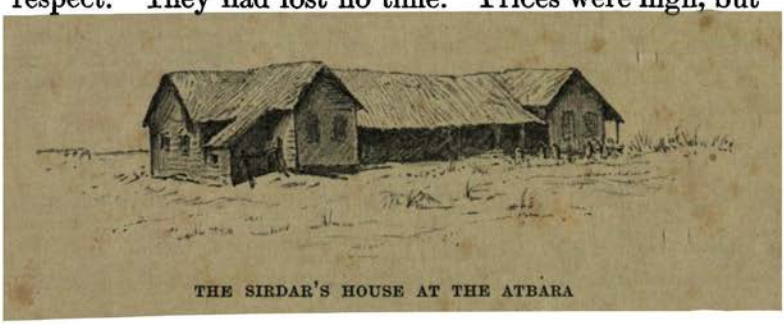
The whole advanced base, except where protected by the river, was surrounded by a strong entrenchment, the profile of which rose at least ten feet above the ground, and against which it was hoped in the spring that the Emir Mahmud would dash himself. Outside the entrenchment was the camp of the second British brigade. The first—or 'Fighting brigade,' as they called themselves—had already moved on in steamers to the point of concentration before Shabluka. Nearly all the Egyptian Infantry had gone south by road or river. There were however, when we arrived, the Rifles, the Grenadier Guards, the Northumberland Fusileers, the two squadrons of the 21st Lancers who had preceded us, three Egyptian battalions, numerous details, some Maxim guns, and General Gatacre and Staff—altogether a considerable population, all of whom were to move south in a few

days and leave the Atbara camp deserted. One striking feature of the place is that its geographical position is so clearly and exactly defined to everybody's intelligence. It would have been easy to take a pin and in the ordinary school atlas to have marked the very acre on which one stood. Looking at the point of junction of the two broad, deep, rushing rivers, it was possible at once to recognise the map on the actual ground.

The original mud village of Dakhila had been improved by the presence of the army and the arrival of the railway. Besides the great depôt, there were a considerable number of substantial mud buildings. The Sirdar had a good-sized house close to the river-bank. Many of the railway and transport officers had also built themselves handsome habitations. There were besides two large hospitals, and a long terrace of mud rooms occupied by polite but important people engaged on all kinds of special undertakings of their own—foreign Military Attachés, heads of various departments, Intelligence Branch officers, and—as representing the fourth estate—Colonel Rhodes and Hubert Howard. In 'Harmony Row,' as the terrace was called, we had several cheery meetings. The constant resident was as eager to hear the latest from London as to tell the newest from the south. Drinks were cool and plentiful; over the scene there hung the exhilarating consciousness of impending war; and the place is one which raises many pleasant memories and only a single sad one.

One other feature of the Atbara must be described, the bazaar. Between the railway and the river, but

outside the entrenchment, there had grown up an actual street. At least thirty shops and stores of various kinds were flourishing. The enterprise of the Greek trader is remarkable. Dangers, difficulties, and discomforts increase his charges, but do not prevent his trade. He is, I think, even more adaptable and energetic than the Parsee in India and on the frontier. The influence of such a class—though they do not look imposing—upon the developement of the Soudan must be great. Every encouragement should be shown them. They may not be high-souled; nevertheless they are worthy of respect. They had lost no time. Prices were high, but



THE SIRDAR'S HOUSE AT THE ATBARA

business was brisk. Here, in the deserts of Africa, on a spot occupied a year before only by a dozen miserable Arabs and goats, it was possible to purchase groceries of all kinds, cigarettes, writing-paper and fountain pens, and settle the bill by a cheque on any London bank. All the camp lay under the shadow of the Egyptian flag, whose red colour and white crescent and star were everywhere conspicuous. Only over the Headquarter Office of the British division was there a small Union Jack; yet that proclaimed the substance of power, and perhaps accounted for the growth of trade.

The whole Expeditionary Force had passed through the Atbara on their way to the front. The Egyptian cavalry and the Soudanese had come from Berber; the first British brigade from Darmali; the second from England. The two companies of the Warwickshire Regiment, which to their disgust had been kept in the Dongola province during the Atbara campaign, had rejoined the battalion. Half the 5th Egyptians had marched from Suakin. The 17th and 18th battalions,[6] towing their supplies with them, had come from Merawi. Every unit—large or small, horse or foot—was moving southwards; some in steamers, some by road: and all paused for a few days at the confluence of the rivers, to make final preparations and await their turn to depart.

Our squadron reached the great camp at noon on the 15th of August, and on that date the actual campaign as far as we were concerned began. We were already two hundred miles further south than the River Column had succeeded in getting in the old campaign after five months of weary and tremendous effort. Up to this point the reinforcements had been brought as easily as if they had been travelling in England. From train to steamer, and from steamer to train, horses and men had been shifted with speed and method. The system of moving troops and the arrangements for their comfort on the journey may be said to have been perfect. Hitherto we had been passengers, tourists on a pleasure trip. Henceforward there was to be a change. The squadron—from mere

[6] These battalions were only raised in 1897.—EDITOR.

stores of men, horses, weapons, and saddles—was again to become a strong, mobile, fighting unit. The toy soldiers, who had been brought so far carefully packed in paper and wadding, were now taken out of the box, quite fresh and brand-new, put on their horses, and set up in rows. The game was going to begin; and though it was not a child's amusement, we felt that it was worth playing if directed by the strong hands that had already carried us so far so well.[7]

[7] I cannot resist telling a story which shows how the easy concentration was regarded by the men who had made it possible. An officer of the newly arrived brigade dined with the Sirdar at the Atbara. 'What sort of a journey up did you have?' inquired the General's Aide-de-Camp, Captain Watson. 'Oh,' replied the officer, 'we had an awful time. It took us ten days to get here.' 'Really!' said Watson; 'it took us three years.'—EDITOR.

CHAPTER XVI

THE FINAL CONCENTRATION

The cavalry convoy—*El Tahra*—Preparations for the march—Transport—A protest—A personal digression—Lost in the desert—The Nile at dawn—A magic word—Pantomime—The convoy again—Weary animals—A *khor*—A motley troop—Magyriah—From the other side—The scenery—Metemma—The Imperial progress—Before Shabluka—Under the palm-trees—The great camp—The Khalifa's mood—Some reflections—The grand army of the Nile—Dervish defences at Shabluka—Up the Sixth Cataract with the flotilla—Round the heights with the cavalry—Royan.

EVENTS now began to move rapidly. Within three weeks of the arrival of the reinforcements the war was over; within five weeks the British troops were returning home. There was no delay at the Atbara encampment. Even before the whole of the second brigade had arrived, some of its battalions were being despatched to Wad Hamed, the new point of concentration. This place was a few miles north of Shabluka, and only fifty-eight miles from Omdurman. It was evident, therefore, that the climax of the three years' war approached. The Staff, the British infantry, one squadron, the guns and the stores, were carried south in steamers and barges. The Egyptian division had already marched to Wad Hamed by brigades. The horses of the batteries, the transport animals of the British division (about 1,400

* Map, 'The Nile from Abu Hamed to Shabluka,' to face page 414.

in number), the chargers of the officers, some cattle, and most of the war correspondents were sent along the left bank of the river escorted by two squadrons of the 21st Lancers and two Maxim guns. The convoy was ordered to march at daylight on the 16th of August. The squadron to which I was attached did not arrive until noon of the 14th. We therefore had sufficient occupation to pass the hours of the single day during which we halted at the Atbara. The horses, saddles, stores of all kinds, and forage for the march, had first to be transported across the river. This was in itself a considerable business. The Arab horses, although very stiff from their long journey in train and steamer, soon recovered their power of kicking and fighting, and many—though they are fearless beasts—obstinately refused to 'walk the plank' which led from the shore to the barge. Their objections were eventually overcome, and as the boats were filled they were towed across the Nile by the little steamer *El Tahra*, which, translated from the Arabic, means *The Virgin*. Despite her name the *Tahra* had a past, and its history may amuse the reader who has followed the long sequence of events. She was originally one of General Gordon's steamers, and had been sent to Khartoum in sections. She had never been put together and when the town fell the Dervishes captured the boat—still disintegrate. They assembled her, probably with the enforced assistance of their prisoners, and, since no infidel foot had ever defiled her deck, proudly christened her *El Tahra*. But the *Tahra* would be no Vestal, and began a career of usefulness in 1896, after the action at

Hafir, where, as has been related, she fell into the hands of the Egyptian troops.

When the squadron had been transported by her agency across the river, we camped in a mud fort which had been among the works erected to resist Mahmud. In this, our first bivouac by the banks of the Nile, the enormous size of the river came home to everyone. We had followed its course nine days from Khizam by steamer. At Halfa the railway had cut off a loop of nearly seven hundred miles. Yet here was the Nile twice as large as before, a vast volume of brown, swirling water streaming towards the sea with a current of nearly six miles an hour and a surface which, disturbed by frequent eddies and upheavals, resembled that of a deep lock when it is being filled.

All the next day we busied ourselves in preparation for the march. Saddles had to be cleaned, carbines and lances examined, horses to be exercised, stores to be packed ready to load on the camels. It was night before all was completed, and very few of the officers had any opportunity of recrossing the river and studying the attractions of the camp. They were occupied with the selection of their kits and in searching for transport to convey them to the front. On my arrival in Cairo, I had inquired on what scale officers were to take the field. It is usual in India to publish an order stating the conditions of the campaign and whether the troops move on the 160-lb., the 80-lb., or the 40-lb. scale. At the best I had hoped for the '80-lb. scale.' To my astonishment I learned that officers were allowed 200 lbs. of baggage. Such

generosity was so unlooked for that I experienced a feeling of incredulity. Nevertheless on the principle of taking 'as much as you can, as far as you can,' I selected a comprehensive and convenient kit, and drew comparisons which were greatly to the disadvantage of the Indian Government. Here was the country where the individual officer was considered. Thus in high content I had arrived at the Atbara. I now looked round for my transport. There was none. Not an ounce of carrying power was provided for officers' baggage on the march. There were, however, plenty of camels and donkeys for sale at high prices, and the suggestion was too plain to be ignored. This digression is intended to introduce a protest against the unjust and undignified principle of illegally squeezing money for the public service out of the pockets of private individuals. Here was one case. But the practice is by no means confined to Egypt or to active service. A cavalry regiment goes to India. It is customary in India for the mounted soldiers to be protected on the shoulders from sword-cuts by little epaulettes of steel chains. No grant is ever made by the Government. It is suggested that the money, which amounts to perhaps 50*l.*, should either be subscribed by the officers or taken from the Canteen Fund—that is to say, subscribed by the men. Year after year camps and manœuvres are held in England. On every occasion officers and soldiers are compelled to pay out of their private means a considerable proportion of the incidental expenses. The whole system is mean, improper, and actually contrary to law. In this

instance a marvellous and necessary economy furnished some excuse; but this excuse is not one of which the British and Indian authorities can well avail themselves.

Early on the morning of the 16th, while the stars were yet in the sky, the convoy and its escort started. The Lancers, with their broad helmet-shades, their voluminous kits and little horses, were scarcely graceful. Yet the *khaki* uniforms, the bandoliers filled with cartridges, the lances with their pennons tightly rolled, lent an air of reality to the scene which was not without its pleasure. As the sun rose they marched off towards the south, and soon were lost among the thorny scrub and palm-trees.

I remained behind, having to hand over surplus stores, and intending to catch up the column in the evening at its first camp, about fifteen miles away. The business I had to do consumed more time than I had anticipated, and it was not until the sun was on the horizon that the little ferry steamer *Tahra* landed me again on the west bank. I made inquiries about the road. 'It is perfectly simple,' they said. 'You just go due south until you see the camp-fires, and then turn towards the river.' This I proceeded to do. I had gone about a mile when the sun sank and the world went into darkness. The bushes by the Nile were thick and thorny, and to avoid these I struck into the desert, steering due south by keeping my back to the Pole star. I rode on at a trot for nearly two hours, thinking all the time that it would be a welcome moment when I sat down to dinner, and above all to a drink. Suddenly, to my dismay, the sky began to

cloud over, and my guiding-star and the pointers of the Great Bear faded and became invisible. For another hour I endeavoured to pursue my old direction, but the realisation that I was out of my bearings grew stronger every moment. At last the truth could be no longer disguised. I was lost. No dinner, no drink; nothing for the pony; nothing to do but wait for daylight!

One thing seemed clear in the obscurity. It was futile to go on at random and to exhaust the animal on whom alone depended my chance of catching up the troops. So I selected a sandy spot behind a rock and, passing the reins round my waist, endeavoured to sleep. Thirst and the fidgeting of the pony effectually prevented this, and philosophic meditation was my sole and altogether insufficient consolation. Although the sky remained clouded, the night was hot. The view in every direction was concealed by the darkness, but the barrenness of the desert was none the less apparent. The realisation of its utter waste and desolation grew. A hot, restless, weary wind blew continuously with a mournful sound over the miles and miles of sand and rock, as if conscious of its own uselessness: a rainless wind over a sterile soil. In the distance there was a noise like the rattle of a train. It was more wind blowing over more desert. The possibility of Dervishes was too remote to be considered; but as the night wore on, the annoyance at missing a needed dinner and the discomfort of my position were intensified by another sensation—a horrible sensation of powerlessness, just like that which a man feels when his horse bolts and will not be stopped. Supposing morning should

reveal nothing but desert, and the trees by the Nile should be hidden by the ground and by the low hills and knolls which rose on all sides! Of course, by riding towards the rising sun, I must strike the Nile sooner or later. But how far was I from it? The idea that the distance might be beyond the powers of my horse jarred unpleasantly. Reason, coming to the rescue, checked such imaginings with the comfortable reflection that twenty miles was the most I could have ridden altogether. Meanwhile the hours passed without hurrying.

At about half-past three in the morning the clouds cleared from one part of the sky and the glorious constellation of Orion came into view. Never did the giant look more splendid. Forthwith I mounted and rode in his direction, for at this season of the year he lies along the Nile before dawn with his head to the north. After two hours' riding the desert scrub rose into higher bushes, and these, becoming more frequent and denser, showed that the Nile was not far off. Meanwhile the sky in the east began to pale, and against it there drew out in silhouette the tracery of the foliage and palm-trees by the river's brink. The thirsty pony pricked up his ears. In the gloom we brushed through the thorny bushes, spurred on by a common desire. Suddenly the undergrowth parted, and at our feet, immense and mysterious in the growing light, gleamed the Nile. I have written much of the great river. Here it thrusts itself on the page. Jumping off my horse, I walked into the flood till it rose above my knees, and began eagerly to drink its waters, as many a thirsty man has done before; while the pony,

plunging his nose deep into the stream, gulped and gulped in pleasure and relief, as if he could never swallow enough. Water had been found; it remained to discover the column.

After much riding I reached their camping-ground, only to find it deserted. They had already marched. There was a village near by. Once it had consisted of many houses and had supported a large population. Now only a few miserable people moved about the mud walls. War and famine had destroyed nine-tenths of the inhabitants. I selected one of the remainder, whose *tarboush*, or fez, proclaimed him a man of some self-respect, and perhaps even of some local importance, and applied to him for breakfast and a guide. He spoke nothing but Arabic: I only one word of that language. Still we conversed fluently. By opening and shutting my mouth and pointing to my stomach, I excited his curiosity, if not his wonder. Then I employed the one and indispensable Arabic word, *Backsheesh!* After that all difficulties melted. From a corner of the mud house in which he lived he produced a clean white cloth full of dates. From another corner some *doura* satisfied the pony. From an inner apartment, which smelt stale and acrid, three women and several children appeared. The women smiled amicably and began to wait on me, handing me the dates one by one in fingers the dark skin of which alone protected them from the reproach of dirt. The children regarded the strangely garbed stranger with large eyes which seemed full of reflection, but without intelligent result. Meanwhile the lord of these splendours had departed with a

wooden bowl. Presently he returned, bearing it filled with fresh, sweet, but dirty milk. This completed a repast which, if it would not gratify the palate of the epicure, might yet sustain the stomach of the traveller.

I next proceeded to ask for information as to the column. With the point of my sword I drew on the red mud wall the picture of a Lancer—grotesque, disproportioned, yet, as the event proved, not unrecognisable. The women laughed, the man talked and gesticulated with energy. Even the children became excited. Yes, it was true. Such a one had passed through the village early that morning. He pointed at the sun and then to the eastern horizon. But not one—many. He began to make scratches on the wall to show how many. They had watered their horses in the river—he lapped vigorously from his hand—and had gone on swiftly. He pointed southwards, and made the motion of running. Then he gazed hard at me, and, with an expression of ferocious satisfaction, pronounced the word 'Omdurman.' He was of the Jaalin, and, looking at the ruins and the desolation around, I could not wonder that he rejoiced that the strong and implacable arm of civilisation was raised to chastise his merciless enemies. I replied to his speech by repeating with considerable solemnity the word *Backsheesh*, and at this, without more ado, he put on his boots and a dirtier blue shirt, picked up his broad-bladed sword, and started. But I will not be wearisome with a further account of my wanderings in the riparian bush, or of the other meals of dates and milk I was forced, and indeed fain, to eat. In the evening I caught up

the column at its camp, and washed away the taste and recollection of native food and native life with one of the most popular drinks of the modern world.

In two marches the convoy had made forty-five miles, and, although this is no great distance for cavalry moving independently, the necessity of conforming to the pace of the slow pack-animals made the way seem long and tedious. The camels were very weary. The rocks

THE TRIUMPH OF ART

of the desert had cut their soft feet, and the uneven ground had broken their toe-nails. The Arab horses were no longer anxious to fight each other, and had scarcely energy to kick. After being cramped for nearly a fortnight on barges and in trucks, it was a severe trial to make them march all day long with nearly seventeen stone on their backs. However, the orders were distinct. The convoy was to reach Wad Hamed on the

24th. Colonel Martin had no choice but to push on, and the camels had perforce to 'pad the hoof' the next day. Several of the horses who had gone lame and could no longer march were shot. The heat of the sun was intense, and it was not long before men began to suffer as well as animals. Four or five cases of heat apoplexy occurred. One ended fatally, and a little mound in the river scrub marked the solitary grave of a British soldier.

The next morning the march was resumed, and this day the road lay nearer the Nile among the thorn-bushes of the belt of vegetation. The dark, almost leafless trees rose from the pale sand in strong contrast—black plants from a white soil. The scenery was impressively stern. Yet the trees gave some shade, of which on the first occasion of a halt we eagerly availed ourselves, only to be driven from the ground by multitudes of ants whose tempers were as hot as the sand in which they lived. From time to time a wide detour was necessitated to avoid the *khors*, all of which were full. Perchance the reader's curiosity is excited to know more exactly what a *khor* is. Let me be explicit. A *khor* is a water-course, usually dry. In India it would be called a *nullah*; in South Africa a *donga*; in Australia a *gully*. The dimensions vary; sometimes it is a formidable ravine, at others merely a crease in the sand. When these *khors* lie close to the flood Nile, the waters of the river flow up them and make them impassable. They have the appearance of tributaries, whereas they are just the reverse. They are indeed similar to the subsidiary canals of an irrigation system.

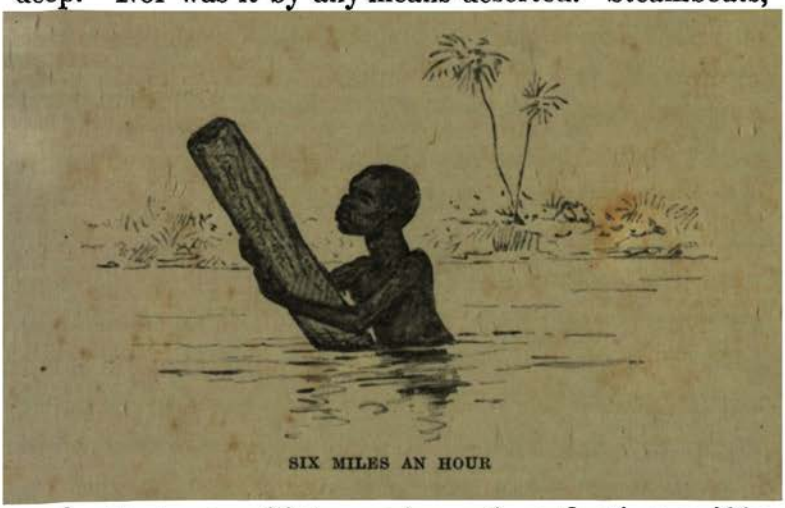
In the Punjaub and in other parts of India the result is produced by artificial means. But the Nile is a natural irrigation system, and has found out all the engineering devices for itself. Although they may obstruct the path and delay the journey, the traveller assuaged by a cool and unexpected drink will not complain. In the evening we rested by such a *khor*, and thus were spared the extra mile of marching to the river. A good many more horses had gone lame, with a peculiar form of *laminitis* which comes on quickly and is not incurable. It is caused partly by the hard, hot ground and partly by the sand wearing away the frog of the hoof, and is very painful. The unfortunate horse can hardly walk, and doubtless takes each step with agony. Several more were shot. More tales of woe came from the camels, and the hardy mules alone remained contented. Several of the war correspondents also expressed themselves strongly about the length of the marches and the practice of moving in the heat of the day. I admit that this was undesirable, but as the moon was not then full, and the ground usually broken, it would have been impossible to march by night.

The next day all the cripples among the horses who gave any hopes of getting well if they had a day's rest, were relieved of their loads. To carry the men and saddles twenty donkeys and a dozen camels were borrowed from the infantry transport. Of this motley troop I was given command. The spectacle was a strange one, for we moved with the precautions of war. First came two tall Lancers sitting sideways on tiny donkeys and carrying their carbines in their hands.

Next in order was a camel loaded up with saddles and led by a sergeant on a mule. There followed a drove of seven or eight little donkeys, carrying more saddles and driven by an Arab boy; and eighteen cavalry horses, all dead lame, and led three at a time by Lancers on donkeys. Another sergeant with a lance prodded the wretched beasts along, but in spite of his efforts they occasionally stopped, jerking the Lancer who led them, and whose donkey was unbridled, in ignominy to the ground. Yet at the sight of the fateful pistol that must destroy all who could not march they started again. The rear of this strange procession was brought up by more camels with saddles, and one with two sick soldiers in cacolets, holding on to an enormous Soudan umbrella, and—if the reader can bear so swift a leap to the ridiculous—by me. Thus we journeyed, and though the march was short we were, since our progress was scarcely a mile and a quarter an hour, glad to reach our destination after ten hours of sun and dust.

On the morning of the fourth day we reached a pleasant spot, and bivouacked in a great palm-grove by the edge of the Nile. The ample foliage of the trees gave an agreeable shade. The swift and abundant waters of the river increased the delicious coolness. Not far away there was fair grazing for the horses, who looked eagerly for some green thing. The ground was smooth, level, and soft to sleep on. More than this, the Egyptian cavalry who had preceded us had camped on this very spot, and had left a large number of shelters cleverly made from the branches of the palm-trees. Here it was determined to halt for an

entire day, to let the transport animals recover and to give the horses a needed rest. The bivouac must take its name from the nearest village—Magyriah. It was the most fertile and hospitable place it was my fortune to see in the Soudan; and yet the dry earth was nearly barren of grass, and thorn bushes cumbered the ground. Only the river was splendid as it streamed by in a great flood, nearly a mile from bank to bank and very deep. Nor was it by any means deserted. Steamboats,



SIX MILES AN HOUR

gunboats, tugs, sailing-vessels, natives floating swiftly down stream on logs of wood or inflated skins, filled the great waterway with life and the affairs of men. One by one I watched seven steamers, each with four barges lashed to its sides, beating their way up the Nile towards Khartoum. From end to end, from top to bottom, they were crowded with the *khaki*-clad infantry of the second British brigade. All came near enough to our bivouac among the palm-trees for the soldiers to shout jokes and friendly chaff at one another. Several

boats we had to stop, to put on board such sick as could no longer march. The Grenadiers, both Fusileer battalions, and half the Rifles passed us during the day. General Gatacre and his aide-de-camp Captain Brooke [1] were on one of the steamers, and both came to visit our bivouac under the palm-trees.

It was a remarkable sight to watch these steamers carrying up British infantry, full of fierceness and armed to the teeth, as if they were so many tons of stores, dumping them down at the point of concentration and returning swiftly with the current of the river, as if light-hearted as well as lightly laden, for more. Nor was it a spectacle which the Dervishes would have admired had they been there to see. Perhaps to these savages, with their vile customs and brutal ideas, we appeared as barbarous aggressors. The British subaltern, with his jokes, his cigarettes, his meat lozenges, and his Sparklet soda-water, was to them a more ferocious creature than any Emir or fanatic in Omdurman. The Highlanders in their kilts, the white loopholed gunboats, the brown-clad soldiery, and the Lyddite shells were elements of destruction which must all have looked ugly when viewed from the opposite side. And yet there was no way out. No terms but fight or death were offered. No reparation or apology could be made. The quarrel was *à outrance*. The red light of retribution played on the bayonets and the lances, and civilisation—elsewhere sympathetic, merciful, tolerant, ready to discuss or to argue, eager to avoid violence, to submit to law, to

[1] Captain R. G. Brooke, 7th Hussars.

effect a compromise—here advanced with an expression of inexorable sternness, and, rejecting all other courses, offered only the arbitrament of the sword.

Refreshed and invigorated, horses and men, camels, mules and donkeys started from the palm-grove after a day's rest. The road still lay in the bush by the river, and we had further opportunities of studying the face of the land and of speculating on its possibilities. The belt of vegetation was here several miles broad, and afforded a shelter to various creatures, both birds and beasts. We had not proceeded far when a splutter of musketry from an advanced patrol made everyone prick up his ears. But it was only a herd of gazelle that had drawn their fire. The antelopes fled from the encounter leaving one wounded, who followed more slowly and was speared by the pursuing Lancers. Here and there were the tracks of hares. One of these was marked down in a bush and had to run the gauntlet of a dozen revolvers. He dodged swiftly in and out among the spurts of dust kicked up by the bullets, just like a man under similar circumstances, and so escaped, though without dignity. The birds were more numerous, and some of the smaller very beautiful. Indeed, they are the only bright specks in the sombre picture of the Soudan scrub. Few flowers grow from the earth. Hardly a butterfly is seen on the wing. Coveys of sand-grouse and sometimes a great bustard were flushed by the advanced patrols, and near the village the trees were full of pigeons. But these, with every variety of biting, crawling, stinging insect, completed the visible *fauna*.

The villages themselves were not without significance.

The whole bank of the river is dotted with them, and their extent and number showed clearly that human industry might in the future, as in the past, raise from the soil by the river-bank the livelihood of a considerable population. But the villages were empty and in ruins. Hardly an inhabitant was to be seen. Riding in the woods, we might learn the explanation. Under the trees, behind a broken wall, in a hollow of the ground, among the rocks, the skeleton made its silent accusation, and imagination swiftly filled in the picture of the flying natives, hunted hither and thither in the scrub, only to fall one by one into the clutches of their pursuers and learn what the mercy of the Baggara Arab means. To the cruelty of men had been added the hostility of Nature. Famine had completed what war had begun. The riverain peoples are scarcely a tenth of what they were before the rise of the Mahdi and the revolt in the Soudan; scarcely a twentieth of their number before the first Egyptian conquest.

Continuing the march for twenty miles, we reached Metemma. The convoy had to make a deflection into the desert to avoid the rocky hills near the Nile. After this we turned again towards the river, and came out on to the plain of Metemma. In the distance by the water there rose a grove of palm-trees. To the right lay the town—a large expanse occupied by mud huts. The sun blazed over the scene, and we were glad to take refuge in the grove until the evening approached. Then, while the shadows grew, we rode slowly on among the sandhills which rise near the Nile, and bivouacked

about two miles south of the town, almost on the spot where the Desert Column had reached the hard-won water thirteen years before. Several officers rode over the field of Abu Kru—or Gubat, as it is sometimes called. The trenches which the British soldiers had dug when they waited before Metemma in 1885 are still visible, as are also the graves of the officers and men who perished there. It was with a strange emotion that we looked at the scene of the end of that historic march, and reflected on the mournful news the steamers brought back from Khartoum to those who had dared and done so much. With the ground before me I could imagine the Desert Column—weak, exhausted, encumbered with wounded, yet spurred by a maddening thirst—toiling painfully towards the river; or, when they had learned they were too late, marching off disconsolately across the plain towards the north. We were the first British soldiers to camp on the ground since then. Instead of having to hold out against continual attack, we slept peacefully and with a slender picket line. The receding tides of barbarism had already left Metemma high and dry. Omdurman remained, but no one doubted the issue. The army that was already at Wad Hamed, the steamers that were towing up fresh battalions, the gunboats dominating the river, the railway that poured supplies to the front, were conclusive evidence. There would be no mistake. The expedition was strong enough; it had started at the best season of the year; it had plenty of time. Yet amid such satisfactory thoughts a mournful reflection obtruded.

We also were too late—thirteen years too late; and the lonely man who had looked for help had long since mouldered in a nameless grave. Is this always to be our method of war and conquest—blunders, follies, bloodshed, an ill-timed or ill-conceived expedition, useless heroism and withdrawal, and then years afterwards a great army striking an overwhelming blow?

It has been so on other occasions. In 1863 the Government of India assailed Buner and 1,000 soldiers fell on the Umbeyla Pass. In 1898 another commander[2] with a stronger force invaded the country and subdued the tribesmen with the loss of a single man. It may be so in South Africa, too; at any rate, we have the shame and failure—perhaps the rest will follow. The pity is that the first cannot be made the successful expedition, and that the lash of disaster or defeat is always needed before victory is won.

The town of Metemma is a study in sepia; nor would the artist who should paint it require any other colour. Before it stretches the plain where Mahmud and his army of nearly 20,000 men and women were encamped for several weeks at the beginning of the year. The whole place was covered with the bones of animals, and not always of animals. Carcases of camels, donkeys, and mules—the hide hanging in strips from their ribs and revealing dark cavities within—dotted the ground. Every kind of filth and garbage was strewn about. There was a sickly smell. Fat, bald-headed vultures circled lazily overhead and waddled composedly up to the cavalry, as if

[2] Major-General Sir Bindon Blood.

speculating on the value of their reversions. All was squalid and miserable. Nor were we sorry to depart after the night was passed.

The slow pace and the heat of the sun, while they did not depress the spirits of the cavalry, increased their desire to conclude the march. The reader may be tired of the peregrinations in the bush, and share with the squadrons the satisfaction of arriving at Wad Hamed. The two marches on from Metemma passed uneventfully; nor can I recall any circumstance which is worthy of record or remark. On the morning of the 24th of August the convoy approached its destination. In the distance over the tops of the scrubby bushes we could see the dust-clouds which marked the great camp, and beyond these again there rose the long, dark range of Shabluka, the last strong position between the army and the Dervish capital.

It was about two o'clock and during the greatest heat of the day that the Lancer squadrons emerged from the scrub, trotted across the open space which had all around the *zeriba* been cleared of bushes, and entered the camp at Wad Hamed.* Several officers of the Staff and of the Egyptian cavalry had ridden out to meet us, and to witness the unusual spectacle of British cavalry on active service. Passing through the principal entrance, we made our way to the appointed camping-ground, attracting the attention of all men—some by our appearance, others by the clouds of dust which rose from the horses' feet, and was whirled all among the tents and bivouacs by the strong south

* Map, 'The Grand Advance,' to face page 80.

wind. The distance was short, and the regiment dismounted on a smooth piece of ground close to the river-bank. Here an agreeable surprise awaited the troopers. A numerous fatigue party of Egyptian cavalrymen arrived to water, picket, and feed the horses, and help the marching column to pitch their camp. The hospitable forethought of the Egyptian cavalry officers had also provided a meal for the weary men, which was now ready in a palm-leaf shelter near the lines. The British soldier's heart was touched. His sense of gratitude was aroused. The Lancers never forgot the incident, and thereafter loudly and consistently proclaimed that 'them *E*gyptians' (they would never call them 'Gippies') were 'good enough, despite their 'ides.'

The officers were not forgotten, and, as we had not halted to eat since daylight, we gladly accepted an invitation. In a pleasant grove of palms—the only patch of green and shade for miles—we discussed an excellent luncheon with our amiable hosts. Afterwards, when the cigarette-smoke curled upwards in the still, hot air, to annoy the beetles on the palm-trees, we discussed many other subjects, and spoke of war and sport, of the impending battle and the Gaiety burlesque, of the Khalifa and the Cesarevitch.

All the thirteen squadrons of cavalry remained three days longer at Wad Hamed. After the fatigues of the march we were glad to have an opportunity of looking about, of visiting regiments known under other circumstances, and of writing a few letters. This last was the most important, for it was now known that after leaving

Wad Hamed there would be no post or communication with Cairo and Europe until the action had been fought and all was over. The halt was welcome for another reason. The camp itself was well worth looking at. It lay lengthways along the river-bank, and was nearly two miles from end to end. The Nile secured it from attack towards the east. On the western and southern sides were strong lines of thorn bushes, staked down and forming a *zeriba*; and the north face was protected by a deep artificial watercourse which allowed the waters of the river to make a considerable inundation. Standing on the bank of this work, the observer might see the whole camp displayed. Far away to the southward were the white tents of the British division. A little nearer rows and rows of grass huts and blanket shelters displayed the bivouacs of the Egyptian and Soudanese brigades. The Sirdar's large white tent, with the red flag of Egypt flying from a high staff, stood on a small eminence. To the right the grove of palm-trees marked the mess of the officers of the Egyptian cavalry. The whole riverside was filled by a forest of masts. Crowds of *gyassas*, barges, and steamers were moored closely together; and while he looked at the furled sails, the tangled riggings, and the tall funnels it was easy for the spectator to imagine that this was the docks of some populous city in a well-developed and civilised land. The foreground of the picture was occupied by the cavalry lines, which covered a large area of ground, and the spectacle of successive rows of horses' backs was, if not imposing, at least remarkable.

But the significance of the picture grew when the

mind, outstripping the eye, passed beyond the long, low heights of the gorge and cataract of Shabluka and contemplated the ruins of Khartoum and the city of Omdurman. There were known to be at least fifty thousand fighting-men collected in their last stronghold. We might imagine the scene of excitement, rumour, and resolve in the threatened capital. The Khalifa declares that he will destroy the impudent invaders. The Mahdi has appeared to him in a dream. Countless angelic warriors will charge with those of Islam. The 'enemies of God' will perish and their bones will whiten the broad plain. Loud is the boasting, and many are the oaths which are taken, as to what treatment the infidel dogs shall have when they are come to the city walls. The streets swarm with men and resound with their voices. Everywhere is preparation and defiance. And yet over all hangs the dark shadow of fear. Nearer and nearer comes this great serpent of an army, moving so slowly and with such terrible deliberation, but always moving. A week ago it was sixty miles away, now it is but fifty. Next week only twenty miles will intervene, and then the creep of the serpent will cease, and, without argument or parley, one way or the other the end will come.

It was a strange war, in every way different from other expeditions on which British troops are sent. Usually the game gets warmer by degrees. One day comes the news that a patrol of the enemy has been seen—perhaps fired on. The next there is some skirmishing at the outposts and a few wounded men are brought into camp. Then there is a little 'sniping'

or a dashing reconnaissance. Gradually the forces close and the more serious operations develope. But this was different. There were no enemy within thirty miles of us. Hardly a shot had been fired since the action on the Atbara in April. The camp was as peaceful as Aldershot or Bisley. And yet we knew that one morning the guns would begin to fire and a big battle open.

The consciousness of the impending event coloured most people's thoughts and actions, although it was little discussed. In the long avenue of life which draws away from the eye of youth there was an obstruction. Something lay across the track and blurred or obscured all that was beyond. Up to this point everything seemed certain; on the further side all was misty and vague. Nevertheless everyone was eager to examine the strange barrier; and that as speedily as might be.

Or there was another picture which rose in the mind—Wad Hamed a month later. The camp was again pitched by the river-bank. The men had their faces to the north—towards home. The boats were moored to the bank. The horses stood quietly in their lines. The canvas city was full of life and movement. Yet some were missing; some had been left further south. The question was, Who? It remained unanswered. Nor did the wise man wish that it should be answered. The great romance of life is spoiled if we skip the pages and look on ahead or to the end.

Such reflections, which in the camp were cut short by the order to march, are now interrupted by the necessities of the narrative. The road to the next camp was a long one; for though Royan island, opposite

to which the site for the next camp had been selected, was only seven miles in the direct line, it was necessary to march eight miles into the desert to avoid the Shabluka heights, and then to turn back to the Nile. The infantry were therefore provided with camel transport to carry sufficient water in small iron tanks for one night; and they were thus able to bivouac half-way, and to complete the journey on the next morning, thus making a two days' march. The mounted troops, who remained at Wad Hamed till all had gone south, were ordered to move on the 27th, and by a double march catch up the rest of the army.

Wad Hamed then ceased for the time being to exist except in name. All the stores and transport were moved by land or water to the south of Shabluka, and an advanced base was formed upon Royan island. Communications with the Atbara encampment and with Cairo were dropped, and the army carried with it in its boats sufficient supplies to last until after the capture of Omdurman, when the British division would be immediately sent back. It was calculated that the scope of this operation would not be greater than three weeks, and on the 27th the army was equipped with twenty-one days' supplies, of which two were carried by the troops, five by the regimental barges, and fourteen in the army transport sailing-vessels. All surplus stores were deposited at Royan island, where a field hospital was also formed.

The Expeditionary Force which was thus concentrated, equipped, and supplied for the culminating moment of the River War, was organised as follows:—

Commander-in-Chief: THE SIRDAR

The British Division

MAJOR-GENERAL GATACRE *Commanding*

1st Brigade	*2nd Brigade*
BRIGADIER-GEN. WAUCHOPE [3]	BRIGADIER-GEN. LYTTELTON [4]
1st Btn. Royal Warwickshire Regt.	1st Btn. Northumberland Fusileers
„ „ Lincoln Regiment	„ „ Grenadier Guards
„ „ Cameron Highlanders	2nd „ Lancashire Fusileers
„ „ Seaforth Highlanders	„ „ Rifle Brigade

The Egyptian Division

MAJOR-GENERAL HUNTER *Commanding*

1st Brigade	*2nd Brigade*	*3rd Brigade*	*4th Brigade*
COL. MACDONALD	COL. MAXWELL	COL. LEWIS	COL. COLLINSON
2nd Egyptians	8th Egyptians	3rd Egyptians	1st Egyptians
IXth Soudanese	XIIth Soudanese	4th „	5th (*half*) „
Xth „	XIIIth „	7th „	17th „
XIth „	XIVth „	15th „	18th „

Mounted Forces

21st Lancers	Camel Corps	Egyptian Cavalry
COLONEL MARTIN [5]	MAJOR TUDWAY	COLONEL BROADWOOD
4 squadrons	8 companies	9 squadrons

Artillery

COLONEL LONG *Commanding*

British	32nd Field Battery, R.A. (with 2 40-pounder guns)	8 guns
	37th „ „ „ (5-inch Howitzers)	6 „
Egyptian	The Horse Battery, E.A. (Krupp)	6 „
	No. 1 Field Battery, E.A. (Maxim-Nordenfeldt)	6 „
	No. 2 „ „ „	6 „
	No. 3 „ „ „	6 „
	No. 4 „ „ „	6 „

Machine Guns

British	Detachment 16th Co. Eastern Division R.A.	6 Maxims
	„ Royal Irish Fusileers	4 „
Egyptian	2 Maxim guns to each of the five Egyptian batteries	10 „

[3] Brigadier-General H. G. Wauchope, C.B., C.M.G.
[4] Brigadier-General Hon. N. G. Lyttelton, C.B.
[5] Colonel R. M. Martin, 21st Lancers.

Engineers

Detachment of Royal Engineers

The Flotilla

COMMANDER KEPPEL

1898 *Class armoured screw gunboats* (3)

Sultan, *Melik*, *Sheikh* — each carrying 2 Nordenfeldt guns, 1 quick-firing 12-pounder, 1 Howitzer, 4 Maxims

1896 *Class armoured stern-wheel gunboats* (3)

Fateh, *Naser*, *Zafir* — each carrying 1 quick-firing 12-pounder gun, 2 6-pounder guns, 4 Maxims

Old Class armoured stern-wheel gunboats (4)

Tamai, *Hafir*[6], *Abu Klea*, *Metemma* — each carrying 1 12-pounder gun, 2 Maxim-Nordenfeldt guns

Steam Transport

5 Steamers: *Dal, Akasha, Ṭahra, Okma, Kaibar.*

The total strength of the Expeditionary Force amounted to 8,200 British and 17,600 Egyptian soldiers, with 44 guns and 20 Maxims on land, with 36 guns and 24 Maxims on the river, and with 2,469 horses, 896 mules, 3,524 camels, and 229 donkeys, besides followers and private animals.

While the army was to move along the West bank of the river—the Omdurman side—a force of Arab irregulars, formed from the friendly tribes, would march along the East bank and clear that of any Dervishes. All the *débris* which the Egyptian advance had broken off the Dervish Empire was thus to be hurled against that falling State. Eager to plunder,

[6] The steamer *El Teb*, wrecked at the Fourth Cataract in 1897, had been refloated, and to change the luck was renamed *Hafir*.

anxious to be on the winning side, Sheikhs and Emirs from every tribe in the Military Soudan had hurried, with what following the years of war had left them, to Wad Hamed. On the 26th of August the force of irregulars numbered about 2,500 men, principally Jaalin survivors, but also comprising bands and individuals of Bisharin; of Hadendoa from Suakin; of Shukria, the camel-breeders; of Batahin, who had suffered a bloody diminution at the Khalifa's hands; of Shaiggia, Gordon's vexatious allies; and lastly some Girniab Arabs under a reputed son of Zubair Pasha. The command of the whole motley force was given to Major Stuart-Wortley,[7] Lieutenant Wood[8] accompanying it as Staff Officer; and the position of these officers among the cowed and untrustworthy Arabs was one of considerable peril.

Meanwhile we waited our turn to march at Wad Hamed, and made ourselves as comfortable as possible. Every few hours the camp dwindled, and acres of blanket shelters or white tents collapsed, disappeared, and left bare ground behind, thus marking the departures of the different divisions and brigades. On the 26th the third squadron of the 21st Lancers arrived, having come the whole way from Cairo by rail and steamer. They had, however, waited a week at the Atbara, and their horses were not so stiff as ours had been. They were eagerly welcomed by their comrades who had marched, and were overwhelmed with tales of hardship and fatigue, which they received without interest, being anxious to tell of their own

[7] Major E. J. Montagu-Stuart-Wortley, C.M.G., 60th Rifles.
[8] Lieutenant C. M. A. Wood, Northumberland Fusileers.

experiences on the river. The regiment was at last complete and formed three squadrons, each at least 130 strong. For the purposes of the war they were now formed into four squadrons, by an extraordinary operation which must be more fully discussed in the chapters reserved for military and other criticism.

While the infantry divisions were marching round the heights of Shabluka to the camp opposite Royan island, the steamers and gunboats ascended the stream and passed through the gorge, dragging up with them the whole fleet of barges and *gyassas*. The northern end of the narrow passage had been guarded by the five Dervish forts, which now stood deserted and dismantled. They were well built, and formed nearly a straight line—four on one bank and one on the other. Each fort had three embrasures, and may, when occupied, have been a formidable defence to the cataract. The embrasures were badly designed, and allowed no sweep of fire to the guns. Some tactical knowledge was, however, displayed in the construction of the works. They could combine their fire, and the gorge was held on strict tactical principles at the enemy's end. Much care had been devoted to the building of these defences, and we might imagine the doubt and the suspicion of their garrisons when the Khalifa ordered their abandonment. The great guns, by which such store was set, must be hoisted out and towed back to Omdurman. The forts, which had taken so many weeks to build, were to be relinquished. Surely all was not well. Yet the Khalifa had said that he would destroy the infidel pigs on the Kerreri Plain, and had

he not the counsels of the Mahdi, who stands before the Throne of the True God, amid the choicest houris of Paradise? It were impious to question. Perchance it was a trap—a stratagem.

Thrashing up against the current, the gunboats and stern-wheelers one after another entered the gorge. The Nile, which below is nearly a mile across, narrows to a bare 200 yards. The pace of the stream becomes more swift. Great swirls and eddies disturb its surface. High on either side rise black, broken, and precipitous cliffs, looking like piles of stones thrown carelessly on a roadway. Through and among them the flood-river poured with a loud roaring, breaking into foam and rapids wherever the submerged rocks were near the surface. Between the barren heights and the water is a strip of green bushes and grass. The bright verdant colour seems the more brilliant by contrast with the muddy water and the sombre rocks. It was a forbidding passage. A few hundred riflemen scattered Afridi-wise among the tops of the hills, a few field-guns in the mud forts by the bank, and the door would be shut.

It was fortunate that the Khalifa had decided to fall back to Kerreri or Omdurman. But for this the name 'Shabluka' might have been invested with a strange significance; for the attack of such a position would have been a costly enterprise. It is true that it could be turned from the landward side by troops marching eight miles into the desert. But even then it would have been a difficult place to assault. The broken ground would have sheltered a swarm of riflemen. The hollows among the hills might have con-

cealed masses of spearmen. The turning force would have had to leave the river, and fight with the wilderness behind it, and with only such water as could be carried on camels. Nor could the gunboats have assisted; for until the heights were taken the gorge was closed, and the steamers could only have ascended at the greatest peril, while their fire was restricted by the walls of rock on either bank.

What seems really wonderful is that the Nile has not discovered that the Shabluka ridge can be turned. Why a river should charge a range of mountains and force a way through their rocks, when the circle of a few miles would have given a sand bed and an unobstructed channel is difficult to explain. We can only conclude that the gorge of the Shabluka is igneous, not aqueous, and that the Nile found its bed already made by an even mightier hand.

The mounted forces marched from Wad Hamed at dawn on the 27th and, striking out into the desert, skirted the rocky hills. Besides the 21st Lancers and nine squadrons of Egyptian cavalry, the column contained the Camel Corps, 800 strong, and the battery of Horse Artillery; and it was a fine sight to see all these horsemen and camel-men trotting swiftly across the sand by squadrons and companies, with a great cloud of dust rising from each and drifting away to the northward. As the road lay close to the heights, we were able to admire the strength of the position which the Dervishes had abandoned without a struggle; and when we rounded the long ridge and turned again to the Nile, it was with the satisfaction of knowing that

nothing lay between the army and its goal except the Kerreri hills and the enemy; if, indeed, there were any enemy—a fact which some had begun to doubt.

As the cavalry neared the camp, and the bushes began to get thicker and taller, we overtook the two infantry brigades who had started at daybreak from their half-way camping-ground and were still on the road. They had had a long march, and we reduced our pace and picked our way, to avoid smothering them with our dust. In consequence we all reached the camp at Royan together. The *zeriba* had been already made and much of the ground cleared by the energy of the Soudanese division, which had been the first to arrive. An advanced depôt was established at Royan island, which was covered with white hospital tents, and near which there was a perfect forest of masts and sails. The tall, gleaming, white shapes of the gunboats rose above the jungle—a curious spectacle. The barges and boats containing the stores and kits awaited the troops, and they had only to bivouac along the river-bank and shelter themselves as quickly as possible from the fierce heat of the sun.

The dark hills of Shabluka, among and beneath which the camp and army nestled, lay behind us now. To the south the country appeared a level plain covered with bush and only broken by occasional peaks of rock. The eternal Nile flowed swiftly by the tents and shelters, and disappeared mysteriously in the gloom of the gorge; and on the further bank there rose a great mountain—Jebel Royan—from the top of which it was said that men might see Khartoum.

CHAPTER XVII

THE GRAND ADVANCE

The army on the march—Under great trees—Woman's rights—The loss of a gunboat—Dervish mining—Through the bush—A notable capture—On the hill of Merreh—The enemy in sight—The prisoner again—The night of the 30th—The advance continues—The infantry on the march—With the cavalry once more—The Dervish encampment—A reckless patrol—The gunboat—The telegraph—The night of the 31st of August.

THE whole army broke camp at Royan on the 28th of August at four o'clock in the afternoon, and marched to Wady el Abid,[1] six miles further south. We now moved on a broad front, which could immediately be converted into a fighting formation. This was the first time that it had been possible to see the whole force—infantry, cavalry, and guns—on the march at once. In the clear air the amazing detail of the picture was displayed. There were six brigades of infantry, composed of twenty-four battalions; yet every battalion showed that it was made up of tiny figures, all perfectly defined on the plain. The cavalry, starting later, rode through the army, and had an excellent view of the whole scene; and the impression of straight lines and clean-cut blocks of men of varied race and different uniform, yet all clothed in the brown colours of field service,

[1] On the left bank of the Nile opposite Um Teref.

and all looking forward over the plain with interested and confident eyes, was one not to be forgotten, even were that desired. Every Egyptian battalion carried its colours in its leading company.[1] Nor were the British without their emblems. The Grenadiers had a little ensign by which they set great store, while the Seaforths marched under a yellow flag which bore their crest and the motto *Cuidich n righ*—'I serve the King.' The other regiments had indulged their fancies, and the Divisional Staff was marked by the gaudy Union Jack made of silk and torn by the bullets in the attack on Mahmud's *zeriba*. Such was the moving panorama.

A Soudanese brigade had been sent on to hold the ground with pickets until the troops had constructed a *zeriba*. But a single Dervish horseman managed to evade these and, just as the light faded, rode up to the Warwickshire Regiment and flung his broad-bladed spear in token of defiance. So great was the astonishment which this unexpected apparition created, that the bold man actually made good his escape uninjured. We camped that night under great trees, and the fact that it was dark before the *zeriba* was finished kept many of the troops at work till a late hour. The 21st Lancers bivouacked close to the Nile bank. The river was here very deep close inshore, and one of our horses, stretching forward eagerly to drink, fell in, and was instantly swept away. After that

[1] The battalions of the Egyptian army have only one colour, which is green; but besides this each company carries a camp colour of different design according to the officer's taste.—EDITOR.

they had to be watered from nose-bags. At length, however, silence descended on the camp, and the sleep of the army was only disturbed by the multitudes of insects, centipedes, scorpions, and other odious, crawling creatures who held the ground against all comers.

On the 29th the forces remained halted at Um Teref, and only the Egyptian cavalry went out to reconnoitre. They searched the country for eight or nine miles, and Colonel Broadwood returned in the afternoon, having found a convenient camping-ground, but nothing else. The officers of the 21st Lancers were greatly perturbed at their regiment not having been employed on this reconnaissance. For my part I remembered the way in which British cavalry are treated in India, being deprived of any opportunity of seeing active service, and I was afraid that it might be the same in the Soudan. Colonel Martin went to the Sirdar, and expressed the alarm of his regiment lest they should be kept in reserve, and the Sirdar promised that he would find them something to do—a promise which he afterwards kept.

We had the day to ourselves, and passed it visiting our friends in the camp or resting either under the invaluable Soudan umbrellas—which, rising here and there like mushroom clusters, marked the officers' quarters—or under the trees, whose leaves gave a good shade and some relief from the glare. Fatigue parties of Egyptian soldiers soon arrived with axes to destroy these natural shelters that the gunboats might have wood, and in spite of protests all were cut down except a single tree, which, partly because it gave shade to the

mess and partly because it was too thick, was left standing.

One incident I must relate which arose out of this wood-cutting. The army had been accompanied by a large number of black women, presumably the wives of the Soudanese soldiers. These the Sirdar had

THE SOUDAN UMBRELLA

constantly endeavoured to banish, refusing to make any provision for them and forbidding them to follow the line of march. But they treated his orders with profound disdain, and they were seen daily trudging along after the troops, carrying their goods and chattels on their heads, in spite of the dust, the sun, the danger, and

the length of the road. I had often felt sorry for them and their fatigues. Yet I suppose theirs was a labour of love. Four of these beauties were now encamped beneath a tree. A stalwart Egyptian soldier advanced to cut it down according to his orders. Forthwith they summoned him to desist, and on his paying no attention to their imprecations the whole four rose in a bunch and rushed upon him, knocking him down, beating him, and pulling his ears. The soldier, rising with a great effort, succeeded in freeing himself, and incontinently fled, pursued by the taunts of the damsels, who retired again to their tree—*which was not cut down.*

Conversation throughout the camp was stimulated by the news of two river disasters—the first to ourselves, the second to our foes. On the 28th the gunboat *Zafir* was steaming from the Atbara to Wad Hamed, intending thereafter to ascend the Shabluka Cataract. Suddenly—overtaken now, as on the eve of the advance on Dongola, by misfortune—she sprang a leak, and, in spite of every effort to run her ashore, foundered by the head in deep water near Metemma. The officers on board, among whom was Keppel, the commander of the whole flotilla, had scarcely time to leap from the wreck, and with difficulty made their way to the shore, where they were afterwards found very cold and hungry. The Sirdar received the news at Royan. His calculations were disturbed by the loss of a powerful vessel, and it was expected that he would not be good company after hearing the report. But he had allowed for accidents, and in

consequence accepted the misfortune very phlegmatically. The days of struggling warfare were over, and the General knew that he had a safe margin of strength.

The other catastrophe afflicted the Khalifa, and its tale was brought to the advancing army by the Intelligence spies, who to the last—even when the forces were closing—tried to pass between them. Not content with building batteries along the banks, Abdullahi, fearing the gunboats, had resolved to mine the river. An old officer of the old Egyptian army, long a prisoner in Omdurman, was brought from his chains and ordered to construct mines. Two iron boilers were filled with gunpowder, and it was arranged that these should be sunk in the Nile at convenient spots. Buried in the powder of each, was a loaded pistol with a string attached to the trigger. On pulling the string the pistol, and consequently the mine, would be exploded. So the Khalifa argued; nor was he wrong. It was resolved to lay one mine first. On the 17th of August the Dervish steamer *Ismailia* moved out into the middle of the Nile, carrying one of the boilers fully charged and equipped with pistol detonator. Arrived at the selected spot, the great cylinder of powder was dropped over the side. Its efficiency as a destructive engine was immediately demonstrated, for, on the string being pulled by accident, the pistol discharged itself, the powder exploded, and the *Ismailia* and all on board were blown to pieces.

Undeterred by the loss of life, and encouraged by the manifest power of the contrivance, the Khalifa

immediately ordered the second of the two boilers to be sunk in the stream. As the old Egyptian officer had been killed by the explosion, the Emir in charge of the arsenal was entrusted with the perilous business. He rose, however, to the occasion, and, having first taken the precaution of letting the water into the boiler so as to damp the powder, he succeeded in laying the second mine in mid-stream, to the joy and delight of Abdullahi, who, not understanding that it was now useless, overwhelmed him with praise and presents.

Beguiled with such stories and diversions, the day of rest at Wady el Abid passed swiftly. Night brought beetles, bugs, and ants as before, and several men were stung by scorpions—a most painful though not dangerous affair. Towards morning it began to rain, and everyone was drenched and chilled, when the sun rose across the river from behind a great conical hill and dispersed the clouds into wisps of creamy flame. Then we mounted and set out. This day the army moved prepared for immediate action, and all the cavalry were thrown out ten miles in front in a great screen which reached from the gunboats on the river to the Camel Corps far out in the desert.

The 21st Lancers were on the left nearest the Nile, and had consequently the thickest scrub to search. The squadron to which I was then, and I trust the reader is now, attached was the left of the whole line and in the most dense bush. It was impossible to see a hundred yards, and it was with the greatest difficulty that connection with the supporting and flanking squadrons was maintained. The thorny bushes necessi-

tated continual detours, and it was almost impossible to preserve the true direction. Had the enemy been wise, five hundred well-posted men could have delayed the whole advance and inflicted severe loss. It was necessary to proceed with the very greatest caution, halting continually and always expecting a shot. But none came. The woods were as silent as the grave. Here and there we discovered deserted Dervish encampments—one of considerable size. Hundreds of *angaribs* lay scattered around, with earthenware vessels and the ashes of numerous fires. These signs of the enemy greatly excited the Lancers, who ranged about the scrub like a pack of hounds.

At length the bush became so thick that it was desirable to dismount a few men with carbines to go on in front and fire should they see anyone. At half-past ten a glimpse of the Dervishes was obtained. Two horsemen appeared for a moment in a clearing, and then galloped away. The soldiers did not fire, not having yet disabused their minds of the idea that they would do wrong to kill a man.

After another mile we halted to ensure communication, and while thus waiting I saw a Dervish in orthodox patched *jibba* and armed with several spears emerge suddenly from the bushes about a hundred yards away and advance towards the nearest vedette—who, of course, continued to look steadfastly in the opposite direction. On my shouting the soldier turned swiftly, saw the Dervish, and thrust at him with his lance. The native avoided the thrust with great agility, and made no attempt to attack the Lancer. I had meanwhile

arrived, and now invited him to lay down his arms. This he did, making friendly gestures. The spears, which were of the barbarous fish-hook pattern, became the spoils of war, and the prisoner was proudly conducted to the rear by a corporal. Had he been seen in the thick bush, instead of in a comparatively open space, he would assuredly have been shot at—and perhaps hit.

When we had advanced a little further, there arose above the scrub the dark outlines of a rocky peak, the hill of Merreh. The whole regiment now concentrated and, trotting quickly forward, occupied this position, whence a considerable tract of country was visible. Here we dismounted and waited for some time, everybody searching the ground with his field-glasses. We were hardly twenty-five miles from Khartoum, and of that distance at least ten miles were displayed. Yet there were no enemy. Had they all fled? Would there be no opposition? Should we find Omdurman deserted or submissive? These were questions which occurred to everyone, and many answered them affirmatively. Several correspondents rode up to look over the plain, and among them Mr. Howard, who always followed the fortunes of the cavalry. I had known him for several years, and we ate some biscuits and chocolate and discussed the situation and its probabilities. Colonel Martin had meanwhile heliographed back to the Sirdar that all the ground was up to this point clear, and that there were no Dervishes to be seen. After some delay orders were signalled back for one squadron to remain till sunset in observation on the hill and for the rest to return to camp. Major

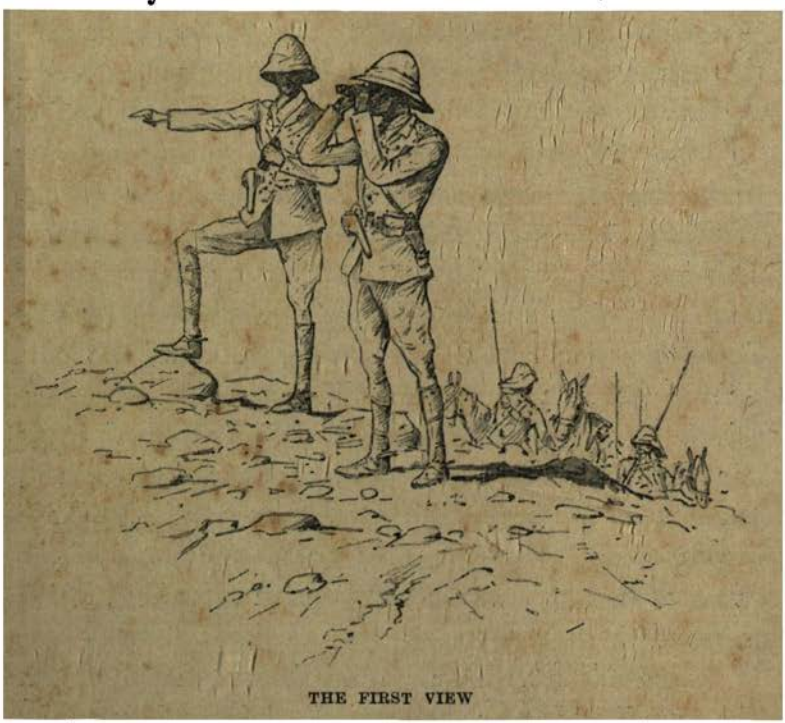
Finn's[2] squadron was selected to remain, and the reader may rejoice that he is thus enabled to see the first powder burned by British troops in the campaign.

With two troops thrown out a mile in front we waited watching on the hill. Time passed slowly, for the sun was hot. Lieutenant Wormald[3] of the 7th Hussars —who was, like me, attached to the 21st Lancers and to this squadron—proceeded to make some excellent soup. He had seen war in South Africa; and as they have few followers or native servants there, the subaltern learns to be handy in all matters of camp and cooking. While he was engaged in this occupation, and I was assisting him by encouraging remarks, it suddenly became evident that one of the advanced troops was signalling energetically. The message was spelt out. The officer with the troop—Lieutenant Smyth[4]—perceived Dervishes in his front. We looked through our glasses. It was true. There, on a white patch of sand among the bushes of the plain, were a lot of little brown spots, moving slowly across the front of the cavalry outposts towards an Egyptian squadron, which was watching far out to the westward.

There may have been seventy horsemen altogether. The soup boiled over, unattended. We could not take our eyes off those distant specks, we had travelled so far, if possible, to destroy. Presently the Dervish patrol approached our right troop, and apparently came nearer than they imagined, for the officer who commanded

[2] Major H. Finn, 21st Lancers.
[3] Lieut. F. W. Wormald, 7th Hussars.
[4] Lieut. R. M. Smyth, 21st Lancers.

—Lieutenant Conolly[5]—opened fire on them with carbines, and we saw them turn and ride back, but without hurrying. A message had now to be sent to the Egyptian squadron, and after an hour the trooper returned with an answer. The officer there had seen the enemy too. There were several bodies of them



THE FIRST VIEW

'knocking about'—so he said. But he had seen plenty of Dervishes in the last three years, and was not much impressed by the sight. We, however, enjoyed ourselves immensely. The sun no longer seemed hot or the hours long. After all, they were there. We had not toiled up on a fruitless errand. The fatigues of

[5] Lieut. T. Conolly, Scots Greys.

the march, the heat, the insects, the discomforts—all were forgotten. We were 'in touch'; and that is a glorious thing to be, since it makes all the features of life wear a bright and vivid flush of excitement, which the pleasures of the chase, of art, of intellect, or love can never excel and rarely equal.

The long day passed slowly, and at length the sun drew towards the desert, and the squadron collecting rode back to camp—weary, hungry, but contented. I, too, was proud of my prisoner—until we reached the army. Then it appeared that this Dervish was no ordinary Dervish. He was a most important individual in the employ of the Intelligence Department, who had been spying in Omdurman, and now returned to tell his news—news which he might very easily have never lived to tell. Naturally several young gentlemen saw fit to be facetious on the subject. Mr. Lionel James, *Reuter's* correspondent, even proposed to telegraph some account of this noteworthy capture. But I prevailed on him not to do so, having a detestation of publicity.

The camp to which we returned was a very different place from the one we had left in the morning. Instead of lying along the river-bank, it was pitched in the thinner scrub. The bushes had on all sides been cut down, the ground cleared, and an immense oblong *zeriba* was built, around which the six brigades were drawn up, and into which cavalry, guns, and transport were closely packed. The fact that there were enemies within a few miles provoked a feeling of exhilaration throughout the whole force. Indeed, I think some enthusiasts would have welcomed a little 'sniping'—

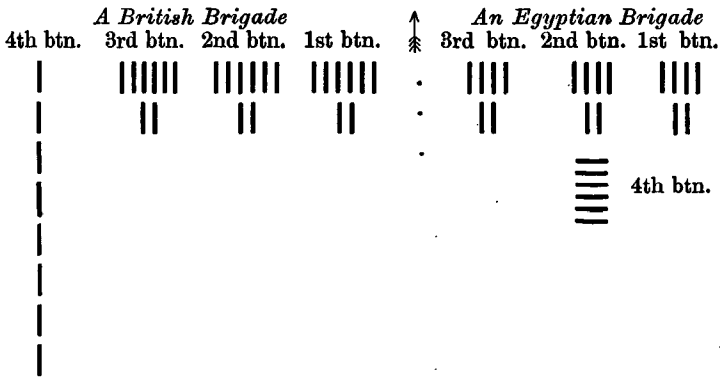
which, had this been the Indian frontier, they would most assuredly have got, for there was a deep *khor* within 500 yards of the camp. The Dervishes, however, confident of their strength, disdained such puny tactics. Why should they disturb those who would shortly be dead, or harass whom they intended to destroy? So the night passed quietly.

Very early next morning the advance was continued. The army paraded by starlight, and with the first streak of the dawn the cavalry were again flung far out in advance. The cantankerous may remark that I write of nothing but the squadrons, and that there is no account of the doings on the march of the mass of infantry of which an army is composed, and to which artillery is only an adjunct and cavalry an ornament. Let me hasten to disarm such criticism.

Secure behind the screen of horsemen and Camel Corps, the infantry advanced in regular array. Up to the 27th of August the force marched by divisions. The arrangements in the British division, which did not differ materially from those of other divisions, may be given as a specimen.

The brigades followed one another, each of their battalions in column of route, all four battalions of the brigade being abreast (at from 50 to 100 yards interval) —the Maxims, Engineers, and 32nd Field Battery (attached for the march) fitting in wherever convenient. This proved a simple and flexible formation. The baggage camels and the field hospitals were massed in rear of the division; the brigade in rear finding one battalion as baggage and rear guard.

On and after the 30th of August the whole force commenced to march in fighting formation. The British division was on the left, the Egyptian army on the right. All the brigades marched in line, or in a slight échelon. The flank brigades kept their flank battalions in column or in fours. Other British battalions had six companies in the front line (in company column of fours) and two companies in support. The Egyptian brigades usually marched with three battalions in front line and one in reserve, each of the three in front line having four companies in front and two in support.



Day after day and hour after hour this method of progression was maintained. At intervals they halted to rest, as is prescribed in the Drill Book, and on such occasions rumours of enemies beyond the next ridge or on the further hill relieved the tedious miles of their march and the monotony of their reflections. Arrived at the camping-ground, the *zeriba* had to be built; and this involved a long afternoon of fatigue. In the evening, when the dusty, tired-out squadrons returned, the troopers attended to their horses, and so

went to sleep in peace. It was then that the dusty, tired-out infantry provided sentries and pickets, who in a ceaseless succession paced the *zeriba* and guarded its occupants. They were sustained by the knowledge that their duties were important, and animated no less by the excellence of their discipline than by the activity of their commanders. Yet I think the reader will prefer to ride with the cavalry screen, with nothing in front of the patrols but the hostile army.

Trotting out the next morning—the 31st—as the light strengthened, we soon reached the hill of Merreh, and while the horses were being watered, I climbed to the top to view the scene. The sun had just risen, and the atmosphere was clear. A wonderful spectacle was displayed. The grand army of the Nile marched towards its goal: a long row of great brown masses of infantry and artillery, with a fringe of cavalry dotting the plain for miles in front, with the Camel Corps—chocolate-coloured men on cream-coloured camels—stretching into the desert on the right, and the white gunboats stealing silently up the river on the left, scrutinising the banks with their guns. Far in rear the transport trailed away into the mirage, and far in front the field-glass disclosed the enemy's patrols. Behind the moving army a long thread of wire made an Empire share its quarrel; before it a long account awaited settlement.

After Merreh Hill was passed, the country became more open; and as the enemy were believed to be near, the 21st Lancers and the Egyptian cavalry each concentrated, and we rode on for several miles in forma-

tion. Presently the heights of Kerreri, till now merely dark hills, began to take shape and detail. About eight miles from them we halted, and a long hour passed. We were only fifteen miles from Omdurman. Still nothing was to be seen of the Dervish army. Had they vanished off the face of the earth? Had they fled to Kordofan? Were these few scattered patrols the only warriors who should dispute our march? While everyone was doubting, a hurried order was given to mount.

In line the whole regiment trotted, and cantered forward for another six miles, all again expectant. Again we halted. The hills were now very near, and underneath them there were some curious white patches and blurs. The field-glass translated them into a great number of flags of different colours waving in the breeze. It was a Dervish camp, and apparently occupied.

The Egyptian cavalry were far away to the right, watching several small parties of horsemen who had meantime appeared from the desert. Nevertheless Colonel Martin had four squadrons. A patrol consisting of Lieutenant Pirie[6] the Adjutant, and of Lieutenant de Montmorency,[7] started on its own account to reconnoitre. The two officers rode towards the Dervish camp and disappeared. Meanwhile we waited and ate some food. Suddenly there were several shots in the distance. Presently the independent patrol returned unhurt with information and a Dervish spear. They

[6] Lieut. A. M. Pirie, 21st Lancers.

[7] Lieut. Hon. R. H. L. J. de Montmorency, 21st Lancers.

had ridden quite close to the camp, they said, and had discovered that it was not strongly occupied. A few Dervishes had fired at them, and they had fired back with their revolvers. The distance was considerable for such weapons; nevertheless one Dervish had been seen to tumble off his horse, though whether from fright or actual injury it was impossible to say. On the way back they had picked up a spear. Such was their tale.

I cannot let it pass without comment. For two officers to ride out alone on such a quest, when it was possible to send a troop of cavalry and proper supports, was reckless and foolish. Had they taken such liberties with any enemy but the Dervishes, who scorn stragglers, they would have been killed. The Afridis would have fired only two shots. It is this reckless, happy-go-lucky spirit that costs the country the lives of many brave officers as the years pass. It is to be expected that young men will dare whenever they get an opportunity, particularly till they have been shot at a good deal. There is some excuse for the two officers of the 21st. The responsibility falls upon their superiors.

After considering all the circumstances Colonel Martin decided not to attack the Dervish camp. The enemy might be in greater force than was expected, and the fight might bring on a considerable action, which would not have suited Sir Herbert Kitchener's plans. We therefore returned slowly towards the infantry, leaving one squadron, as before, in observation.

The army had by this time reached the new camping-ground which Sir Henry Rawlinson [8] had been ordered to

[8] Captain Sir H. Rawlinson, Bart., Coldstream Guards.

select. The position was a strong one, on a high swell of open ground which afforded a clear field of fire in every direction. It was, however, nearly a mile from the river, and we therefore took our horses to water before entering the camp. Meanwhile the sudden, rapid advance of the Lancers had been seen from the camp, and it was reported to the Sirdar that they were sharply engaged with the enemy. He therefore ordered a gunboat to support the cavalry. The *Sheikh* steamed swiftly up the river to the Kerreri Hills, and, catching sight of the Dervish flags, opened fire. The booming of the guns came down to us as we watered our horses, and when we reached the camp everyone was standing on tip-toe in the hopes of seeing what was going on. The cannonade had no other results. The Dervish post was not a strong one, and on the approach of the gunboat the horsemen withdrew behind the hill. After firing about thirty shells the *Sheikh* came back with the current of the stream, and was again moored to the bank.

Such were the 'operations' of the 31st of August. They had produced a good deal of pleasure, and caused no loss of life. The affair was much magnified by the newspaper correspondents, who naturally were eager to bring the public interest in England to a climax, and this was of course the first event. There was, however, no necessity to exaggerate thereafter, for the events of the two succeeding days were in themselves sufficiently tremendous. Everyone that night lay down to sleep with a feeling of keen expectancy. One way or the other all doubts would be settled the next

day. The cavalry would ride over the Kerreri Hills, if they were not occupied by the enemy, and right up to the walls of Omdurman. If the Dervishes had any army—if there was to be any battle, we should know within a few hours. In the evening I talked to Slatin Pasha, whose emotions on approaching the scene of his long captivity were strangely mixed. He said there would be fighting, and that it was not impossible that riflemen would attack the camp that night. But a great many people of knowledge and experience thought that the Khalifa had fled, and that there would be only a bloodless triumph.

The telegrams which were despatched that evening were the last to reach England before the event. During the night heavy rain fell, and all the country was drenched. The telegraph-wire had been laid along the ground, as there had been no time to pole it. The sand when dry is a sufficient insulator, but when wet its non-conductivity is destroyed. Hence all communications ceased, and those at home who had husbands, sons, brothers, or friends in the Expeditionary Force were left in an uncertainty as great as that in which we slept—and far more painful.

The long day had tired everyone. Indeed, the whole fortnight since the cavalry convoy had started from the Atbara had been a period of great exertion. I know not what the experience of the other troops may have been, but the Lancers, officers and men, were glad to eat a hasty meal, and forget the fatigues of the day, the hardness of the ground, and the anticipations of the morrow in deep sleep. The camp was watched

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by the infantry, whose labours did not end with the daylight. At two o'clock in the morning I was awakened by rain and storm. Great blue flashes of lightning lit up the wide expanse of sleeping figures, of crowded animals, and of shelters fluttering in the wind; and from the centre of the camp it was even possible to see for an instant the continuous line of sentries who watched throughout the night with ceaseless vigilance. Nor was this all. Far away, near the Kerreri Hills, I saw the yellow light of a burning village. The ragged forks of flame shot up, unquenched by the rain, and only invisible in the bright flashes of the lightning. There was war to the southward.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE RECONNAISSANCE OF KERRERI

SEPTEMBER 1, 1898

'The large birds of prey'—Khartoum in sight—The plain of Omdurman—The Dervish army—First blood—The advance of the enemy—The Khalifa's dispositions—The bombardment—The irregulars—An incident—The Mahdi's Tomb—Retirement—A bird's-eye view—The Sirdar—A luncheon party—Skirmishing—The night—In the searchlight—The perils of the darkness—The disposition of the force—The chances of attack—Silence.

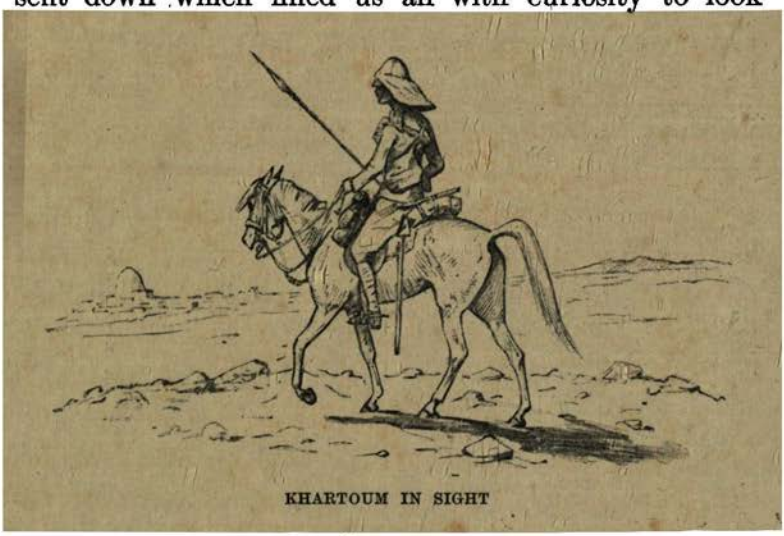
I DO not doubt that the reader is as anxious to see the walls of Omdurman and to come to the end of the affair, as were the army on the morning of the 1st of September. Whether this is because I have interested him in the impending battle, or wearied him with the monotonies of the march, I shall not presume to inquire. But he shall at any rate start at once with the cavalry, nor will I palter with tales of how the chilled soldiers warmed themselves before the fires that lighted the camp and cooked the breakfasts of a hurried meal; of carbines, rusted by the rain, swabbed with oil to make their bolts slide; of weary horses once more saddled—lame, girth-galled, or sore-backed notwithstanding; of great masses of brown-clad, armed men forming silently under the stars, while the light grew gently in the east. These are impressions he must some day gather for himself or forgo for ever.

The British and Egyptian cavalry, supported by the Camel Corps and Horse Artillery, trotted out rapidly, and soon interposed a distance of eight miles between them and the army. As before, the 21st Lancers were on the left nearest the river, and the Khedivial squadrons curved backwards in a wide half-moon to protect the right flank. While we were moving off, the gunboat flotilla was seen to be in motion. The white boats began to ascend the stream leisurely. Yet their array was significant. Hitherto they had moved at long and indefinite intervals—one following perhaps a mile, or even two miles, behind the other. Now a regular distance of about 300 yards was observed. Our orders were to reconnoitre Omdurman; their task to bombard it.

We had not accomplished more than a mile, when about a hundred enormous vultures joined us, and henceforth they accompanied the 21st Lancers, flying or waddling lazily from bush to bush, and always looking back at the horsemen. Throughout the Soudan it is believed that this portends ill-fortune, and that the troops over which vultures circle will suffer heavy losses. Although the ominous nature of the event was not known to us, officers and men alike were struck by the strange and unusual occurrence; and it was freely asserted that these birds of prey knew that two armies were approaching each other, and that this meant a battle, and hence a feast. It would be difficult to assign limitations to the possibilities of instinct. The sceptic must at least admit that the vultures guessed aright, even if they did not know. Yet we thought

them wrong, when we found the steep Kerreri Hills abandoned and the little Dervish camp, which had been shelled the day before, deserted and solitary.*

The regiment halted at the foot of the Kerreri Hills as soon as it was known these were deserted. The scouts, Colonel Martin and a few other officers, ascended, taking signallers with them. We waited, eating some breakfast. Then presently a message was sent down which filled us all with curiosity to look



KHARTOUM IN SIGHT

over the crest. The signal-flag wagged tirelessly, and we spelt out the following words: 'Khartoum in sight.' More than thirteen years had passed since an Englishman could have said that with truth.

After a short halt the advance was resumed, and, turning the shoulder of the hill, I saw in the distance a yellow-brown pointed dome rising above the blurred horizon. It was the Mahdi's Tomb, standing in the very

* Map, 'The Reconnaissance of Kerreri,' to face page 98.

heart of Omdurman. From the high ground the field-glass disclosed rows and rows of mud houses, making a dark patch on the brown of the plain. To the left the river, steel-grey in the morning light, forked into two channels, and on the tongue of land between them the gleam of a white building showed among the trees. Then we knew that before us were the ruins of Khartoum and the confluence of the Blue and White Niles.

A black, solitary hill rose between the Kerreri position and Omdurman. A long, low ridge running from it concealed the ground beyond. For the rest there was a wide, rolling, sandy plain of great extent, surrounded on three sides by rocky hills and ridges, and patched with coarse, starveling grass or occasional bushes. The river—the inevitable river—framed the picture on the left, and by its banks a straggling mud village stood. This, though we did not know it, was to be the field of Omdurman.

It was deserted. Not a living soul could be seen. And now there were many who said once and for all that there would be no fight; for here we were, arrived at the very walls of Omdurman, and never an enemy to bar our path. Then, with our four squadrons looking very tiny on the broad expanse of ground, we moved steadily forward. At the same time the Egyptian cavalry and the Camel Corps entered the plain several miles further to the west, and they too began to trot across it.

It was about three miles to the hill and ridge of which I have written, the last ridge which lay between us and the city. If there was a Dervish army, if there was to be a battle, if the Khalifa would maintain his

boast and accept the arbitrament of war, much must be visible from that ridge. We looked over. At first nothing was apparent except the walls and houses of Omdurman and the sandy plain sloping up from the river to distant hills. Then four miles away on our right front, I perceived a long black line with white spots. It was the enemy. It seemed to us, as we looked, that there might be 3,000 men behind a high dense *zeriba* of thorn-bushes. That, said the officers, was better than nothing. There would in any case be a skirmish.

It is scarcely necessary to describe our tortuous movements towards the Dervish position. Looking at it now from one point of view, now from another, but always edging nearer, the cavalry slowly approached it, and halted in the plain about three miles away—three great serpents of men—the light-coloured one, the 21st Lancers; a much longer and a blacker one, the Egyptian squadrons; a mottled one, the Camel Corps and Horse Artillery.

From this distance a clearer view was possible, and we distinguished many horsemen riding about the flanks and front of the broad dark line which crowned the crest of the slope. A few of these rode carelessly towards the squadrons to look at them. They were not apparently acquainted with the long range of the Lee-Metford carbine. Several troops were dismounted, and at 800 yards fire was made on them. Two were shot and fell to the ground. Their companions, dismounting, examined them, picked up one, let the other lie, and resumed their ride, without acknowledging the bullets by even an increase of pace.

While this passed, so did the time. It was now nearly eleven o'clock. Suddenly the whole black line which seemed to be *zeriba* began to move. It was made of men, not bushes. Behind it other immense masses and lines of men appeared over the crest; and while we watched, amazed by the wonder of the sight, the whole face of the slope became black with swarming savages. Four miles from end to end, and as it seemed in five great divisions, this mighty army advanced—swiftly. The whole side of the hill seemed to move. Between the masses horsemen galloped continually; before them many patrols dotted the plain; above them waved hundreds of banners, and the sun, glinting on many thousand hostile spear-points, spread a sparkling cloud. It was, perhaps, the impression of a lifetime; nor do I expect ever again to see such an awe-inspiring or formidable sight.

It is now known that the Khalifa had succeeded in concentrating at Omdurman an army of more than 60,000 men. He remembered that all the former victories over the Egyptians had been won by the Dervishes attacking. He knew that in all the recent defeats they had stood on the defensive. He therefore determined not to oppose the advance at the Shabluka or on the march thence to Omdurman. All was to be staked on the issue of a great battle on the plains of Kerreri. The Mahdi's prophecy was propitious. The strength of the Dervish army seemed overwhelming. When the 'Turks' arrived, they should be driven into the river. Accordingly the Khalifa had only watched the advance of the Expeditionary Force from Wad Hamed

with a patrol of cavalry about 200 strong. On the 30th he was informed that the enemy drew near, and on the 31st he assembled his bodyguard and regular army, with the exception of the men needed for the river batteries, on the Omdurman parade ground. He harangued the leaders, and remained encamped with his troops during the night. The next day all the male population of the city were compelled to join the army in the field, and only the gunners and garrisons on the river-face remained within. In spite, however, of his utmost vigilance, nearly 6,000 men deserted during the nights of the 31st of August and the 1st of September. This and the detachments in the forts reduced the force actually engaged in the battle to 52,000 men. The host that now advanced towards the British and Egyptian cavalry was perhaps 4,000 stronger.

Their array was regular and precise, and, facing north-east, stretched for more than four miles from flank to flank. A strong detachment of the *mulazemin* or guard was extended in front of the centre. Ali-Wad-Helu, with his bright green flag, prolonged the line to the left; and his 5,000 warriors, chiefly of the Degheim and Kenana tribes, soon began to reach out towards the Egyptian cavalry. The centre and main force of the army was composed of the regular troops, formed in squares under Osman Sheikh-ed-Din and Osman Azrak. This great body comprised 12,000 black riflemen and about 13,000 black and Arab spearmen. In their midst rose the large, dark green flag which the Sheikh-ed-Din had adopted to annoy Ali-Wad-Helu, of whose distinctive emblem he was inordinately jealous.

The Khalifa with his own bodyguard, about 2,000 strong, followed the centre. In rear of all marched Yakub with the Black Flag and 13,000 men—nearly all swordsmen and spearmen, who with those extended in front of the army constituted the guard. The right wing was formed by the brigade of the Khalifa Sherif, consisting of 2,000 Danagla tribesmen, whose principal ensign was a broad red flag. Osman Digna, with about 1,700 Hadendoa, guarded the extreme right and the flank nearest Omdurman, and his fame needed no flag. Such was the great army which now moved swiftly towards the watching squadrons; and these, pausing on the sandy ridge, pushed out a fringe of tentative patrols, as if to assure themselves that what they saw was real.

The Egyptian cavalry had meanwhile a somewhat different view of the spectacle. Working on the right of the 21st Lancers, and keeping further from the river, the leading squadrons had reached the extreme western end of the Kerreri ridge at about seven o'clock. From here the Mahdi's Tomb was visible, and, since the rocks of Surgham did not obstruct the view from this point, the British officers, looking through their field-glasses, saw what appeared to be a long column of brown spots moving south-westwards across the wide plain which stretches away to the west of Omdurman. The telescope, an invaluable aid to reconnaissance, developed the picture. The brown objects proved to be troops of horses grazing; and beyond, to the southward, camels and white flapping tents could be distinguished. There were no signs that a retreat was in progress; but from such a distance—nearly four

miles—no certain information could be obtained, and Colonel Broadwood decided to advance closer. He accordingly led his whole command south-westward towards a round-topped hill which rose about four miles from the end of the Kerreri ridge and was one of the more distant hill features bounding the plain on the western side. The Egyptian cavalry moved slowly across the desert to this new point of observation. On their way they traversed the end of the *khor* Shambat, a long depression which is the natural drainage channel of the plains of Kerreri and Omdurman, and joins the Nile about four miles from the city. The heavy rain of the previous night had made the low ground swampy, and pools of water stood in the soft, wet sand. The passage, however, presented no great difficulty, and at half-past eleven the Egyptian squadrons began to climb the lower slopes of the round-topped hill. Here the whole scene burst suddenly upon them. Scarcely three miles away the Dervish army was advancing with the regularity of parade. The south wind carried the martial sound of horns and drums and —far more menacing—the deep murmur of a multitude to the astonished officers. Like the 21st Lancers—three miles away to their left, at the end of the long sandy ridge which runs westward from Surgham—the soldiers remained for a space spell-bound. But all eyes were soon drawn from the thrilling spectacle of the Dervish advance by the sound of guns on the river.

At about eleven o'clock the gunboats had ascended the Nile, and now engaged the enemy's batteries on both banks. Throughout the day the loud reports of their

guns could be heard, and, looking from our position on the ridge, we could see the white vessels steaming slowly forward against the current, under clouds of black smoke from their furnaces and amid other clouds of white smoke from the artillery. The forts, which mounted nearly fifty guns, replied vigorously; but the British aim was accurate and their fire crushing. The embrasures were smashed to bits and many of the Dervish guns dismounted. The rifle trenches which flanked the forts were swept by the Maxim guns. The heavier projectiles, striking the mud walls of the works and houses, dashed the red dust high into the air and scattered destruction around. Despite the tenacity and courage of the Dervish gunners, they were driven from their defences and took refuge among the streets of the city. The great wall of Omdurman was breached in many places, and a large number of unfortunate non-combatants were killed and wounded.

Meanwhile the Arab Irregulars, under Major Wortley, had been sharply engaged. That officer's orders were to co-operate with the flotilla by taking in rear the forts and fortified villages on the east bank of the river. As soon as the gunboats had silenced the lower forts, Major Wortley ordered the Irregulars to advance on them and on the houses. He placed the Jaalin, who were practically the only trustworthy men in his force, in reserve, and formed the tribes according to their capabilities and prejudices. On the order to attack being given, the whole force, some 3,000 strong, advanced on the buildings, from which the Dervishes at once opened fire. Arrived within 500 yards they

halted, and began to discharge their rifles in the air; they also indulged in frantic dances expressive of their fury and valour, but declined to advance any further.

Major Wortley then ordered the Jaalin to attack. These—formed in a long column, animated by the desire for vengeance, and being besides brave men—moved upon the village at a slow pace, and, surrounding one house after another, captured it and slew all its defenders, including the Dervish Emir and 350 of his followers. The Jaalin themselves suffered a loss of about sixty killed and wounded.

While the attack was in progress, a party of five Baggara horsemen issued from the village and charged gallantly. Major Wortley and Lieutenant Wood were watching the fight, protected by an escort of fifty Arabs. On the approach of the Baggaras the escort fled. The two British officers defended themselves desperately with their revolvers. A horseman galloped at Lieutenant Wood, who awaited his charge pistol in hand. The Dervish levelled his broad spear, and scarcely missed the subaltern's throat by an inch. His outstretched arm shot over the officer's left shoulder, and the latter, meeting him in violent collision, thrust his revolver in the wild face and pulled the trigger.

Encouraged by the resistance of the white officers, a dozen of the escort rallied, and, returning to the fight, destroyed the Baggara horsemen, who were impeded by the heavy ground and mud. The capture of the village by the Jaalin was accompanied by many horrid acts of vengeance. As the Dervishes were dragged out of the houses, they were brought still struggling towards

the water's edge and there despatched. The spectacle disgusted the British officers; but no efforts could restrain the fury of the Jaalin; nor was it possible to distinguish the prisoners from the captors until the flash of steel and a confused scrimmage marked the bloody settlement of the tribal feud. The Emir was, however, brought to the river, close to where a gunboat was waiting, mortally wounded, but still alive. As he lay on the bank an Egyptian soldier walked along the gang-plank to the shore, and, approaching the old chief, kicked him with deliberation. Fortunately Major Gordon witnessed the perpetration of this brutal act, and the Egyptian, who had probably expected to be complimented on his courage, was, to his intense amazement, forthwith strapped across the breech of the gunboat's howitzer and soundly flogged.

The village being captured, and the enemy on the East bank killed or dispersed, the gunboats proceeded to engage the batteries higher up the river. The howitzer battery was now landed, and at 1.30 began to bombard the Mahdi's Tomb.

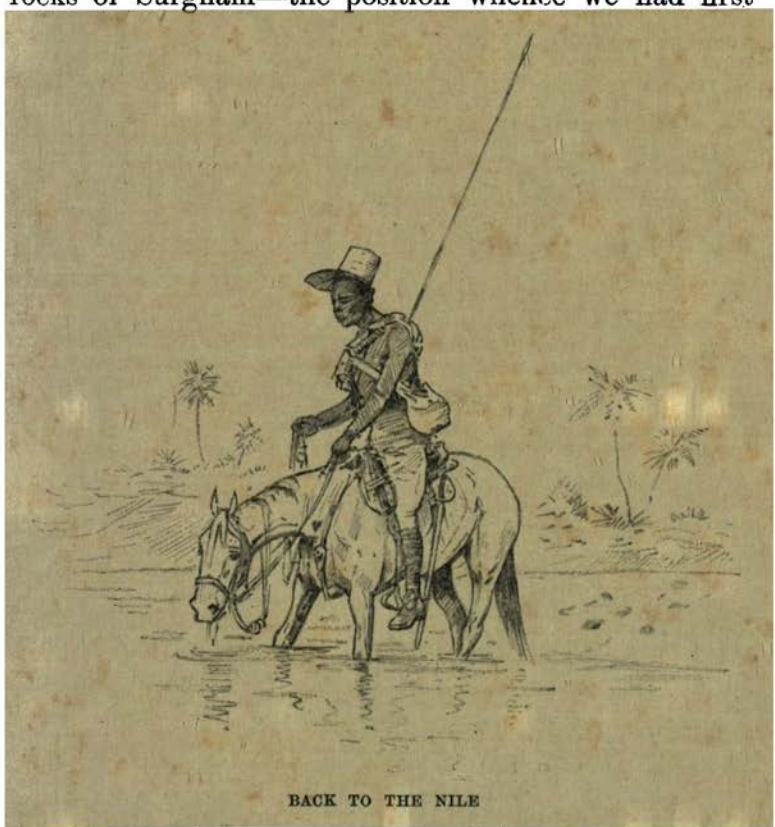
This part of the proceedings was plainly visible to us, waiting and watching on the ridge, and its interest even distracted my attention from the Dervish army. The dome of the tomb rose tall and prominent above the mud houses of the city. A Lyddite shell burst over it—a great flash, a white ball of smoke, and, after a pause, the dull thud of the distant explosion. Another followed. At the third shot, instead of the white smoke, there was a prodigious cloud of red dust, in which the whole tomb disappeared. When this

cleared away we saw that, instead of being pointed, it was now flat-topped. Other shells continued to strike it with like effect, some breaking holes in the dome, others smashing off the cupolas, all enveloping it in dust, until I marvelled alike at the admirable precision and the wasteful folly of the practice.[1]

All this time the Dervishes were coming nearer, and the steady and continuous advance of the great army compelled the Egyptian cavalry to mount their horses and trot off to some safer point of view. Colonel Broadwood conceived his direct line of retreat to camp threatened, and shortly after one o'clock he began a regular retirement. Eight squadrons of Egyptian cavalry and the Horse Artillery moved off first. Five companies of the Camel Corps, a Maxim gun section, and the ninth squadron of cavalry followed as a rear-guard under Major Tudway. The Dervish horsemen contented themselves with firing occasional shots, which were replied to by the Camel Corps with volleys whenever the ground was suited to dismounted action. From time to time one of the more daring Arabs would gallop after the retreating squadrons, but a shot from a carbine or a threatened advance always brought the adventurous horseman to a halt. The retirement was continued without serious interference, and the boggy ground of the *khor* Shambat was recrossed in safety.

[1] There is plenty of evidence to show that the bombardment of the tomb produced a discouraging effect upon the Dervishes, who had believed it indestructible. This result could, no doubt, have been obtained without the long and continued shelling to which it was subjected, but it must be also remembered that the Arsenal, the Khalifa's house, and other important buildings, which it was necessary to bombard, were known to be near the Mahdi's Tomb.—EDITOR.

As soon as the Egyptian squadrons—a darker mass under the dark hills to the westward—were seen to be in retirement, Colonel Martin withdrew the 21st Lancers slowly along the sandy ridge towards the rocks of Surgham—the position whence we had first



BACK TO THE NILE

seen the Dervish army. The regiment wheeled about and fell back by alternate wings, dropping two detached troops to the rear and flanks to make the enemy's patrols keep their distance. But when the Arab horsemen saw all the cavalry retiring they became very bold, and numerous small groups of fives and

sixes began to draw nearer at a trot. Accordingly, whenever the ground was favourable, the squadrons halted in turn for a few minutes to fire on them. In this way perhaps half-a-dozen were killed or wounded. The others, however, paid little attention to the bullets, and continued to pry curiously, until at last it was thought necessary to send a troop under Lieutenant Taylor [2] to drive them away. The score of Lancers galloped back towards the inquisitive patrols in a most earnest fashion. The Dervishes, although more numerous, were scattered about in small parties and unable to collect. They declined the combat, and we saw them scurrying away towards their own ranks, exactly like startled rabbits running back into the bracken. The great army, however, still advanced majestically, pressing the cavalry back before it; and it was evident that if the Khalifa's movement continued, and in spite of it being nearly one o'clock, there would be a collision between the main forces before the night. I was sent back to describe the state of affairs to the Sirdar.

To make certain of the position of the Expeditionary Force before starting in search of it, I climbed the black hill of Surgham and looked around.

From the summit the scene was extraordinary. The great army of Dervishes was dwarfed by the size of the landscape to mere dark smears and smudges on the brown of the plain. Looking east, another army was now visible—the British and Egyptian army. All six brigades had passed the Kerreri Hills, and now stood drawn up in a crescent, with their backs to the

[2] Lieut. A. H. M. Taylor, 21st Lancers.

Nile. The transport and the houses of the village of Egeiga filled the enclosed space. Neither force could see the other, though but five miles divided them. I looked alternately at each array. That of the enemy was, without doubt, both longer and deeper. Yet there seemed a superior strength in the solid battalions, whose lines were so straight that they might have been drawn with a ruler.

The urgency of my message allowed only a momentary view. But the impression produced by the sight of two armies thus approaching each other with hostile intent—for the Arab advance was very rapid—was so tremendous, that I found it necessary, lest my excitement should be apparent, to walk for a quarter of a mile before delivering my account.

The Sirdar, followed by a dozen Staff officers, was riding a few hundred yards from the *zeriba*. He had not yet seen the Dervish army, and was at the moment going to the hill of Surgham to take a general view. Nevertheless, he invited me to describe the situation as seen from the advanced squadrons. This I did, though neither at such length nor perhaps with such facility as in these pages. The swift advance of the enemy brought the moment very near. They were now but four miles away. In an hour, if they continued their movement, the action must begin. All the results of many years of preparation and three years of war must stand upon the issue of the event. If there had been a miscalculation, if the expedition was not strong enough, or if any accident or misfortune such as are common in battles were to occur, then utter ruin would descend upon the enterprise.

The Sirdar was very calm. His confidence had been communicated to his Staff. 'We want nothing better,' they said. 'Here is a good field of fire. They may as well come to-day as to-morrow.'

It occurred to me that if the action was to begin in an hour, it would be prudent to have some lunch before returning to the regiment, so I left the Staff and rode into the *zeriba*. The camp presented an animated appearance. The troops had piled arms after the march, and had already built a slender hedge of thorn-bushes around them. Now they were eating their dinners, and in high expectation of a fight. The whole army had been ordered to stand to arms at two o'clock in formation to resist the attack which it seemed the Dervishes were about to deliver. As I passed the Intelligence mess, Major Friend[3] kindly offered me some luncheon—an invitation which, since food was the quest on which I had come to the camp, I had much pleasure in accepting. Standing at a table spread in the wilderness, we ate a substantial meal. It was like a race lunch before the big event. Colonel Wingate, Slatin Pasha, Colonel Rhodes, and the Foreign Attachés were of the party. Next to me, on my left, was Baron von Tiedemann, the officer of the German General Staff selected to watch the operations. We talked. He was enthusiastic. 'This is the 1st of September,' he said. 'Our great day, and now your great day; Sedan and Soudan.' I laughed at his ponderous wit; nor have I since been able to decide whether or not it cloaked a rather bitter sarcasm.

[3] Major L. B. Friend, R.E.

Longmans, Green & Co. London, New York & Bombay.

Meanwhile the 21st Lancers remained among the sandhills to the west of the Surgham Hill, and watched the hostile advance. I had hardly rejoined them, when it ceased. At a quarter to two the Dervish army halted. Their drill was excellent, and they all stopped as by a single command. Then suddenly their riflemen discharged their rifles in the air with a great roar—a barbaric *feu de joie*. The smoke sprang up along the whole front of their array, running from one end to the other. After this they lay down on the ground, and it became certain that the matter would not be settled that day.

We remained in our position among the sandhills of the ridge until the approach of darkness, and during the afternoon various petty encounters took place between our patrols and those of the enemy, resulting in a loss to them of about a dozen killed and wounded, and to us of one corporal wounded and one horse killed. Then, as the light failed, we returned to the river to water and encamp, passing into the *zeriba* through the ranks of the British division, where officers and men, looking out steadfastly over the fading plain, asked us whether the enemy were coming—and, if so, when. And it was with confidence and satisfaction that we replied, and they heard, 'Probably at daylight.'

When the gunboats had completed their bombardment, had sunk a Dervish steamer, had silenced all the hostile batteries, and had sorely battered the Mahdi's Tomb, they returned leisurely to the camp, and lay moored close to the bank to lend the assistance of their guns in case of attack. As the darkness became

complete they threw their powerful searchlights over the front of the *zeriba* and on to the distant hills. The wheeling beams of dazzling light swept across the desolate, yet not deserted, plain. The Dervish army lay for the night along the eastern slope of the Shambat depression. All the 50,000 faithful warriors rested in their companies near the flags of their Emirs. The Khalifa slept in rear of the centre of his host, surrounded by his generals. Suddenly the whole scene was lit by a pale glare. Abdullahi and the chiefs sprang up. Everything around them was bathed in an awful white illumination. Far away by the river there gleamed a brilliant circle of light—the cold, pitiless eye of a demon. The Khalifa put his hand on Osman Azrak's shoulder—Osman, who was to lead the frontal attack at dawn—and whispered, 'What is this strange thing?' 'Sire,' replied Osman, 'they are looking at us.' Thereat a great fear filled all their minds. The Khalifa had a small tent, which showed conspicuously in the searchlight. He had it hurriedly pulled down. Some of the Emirs covered their faces, lest the baleful rays should blind them. All feared that some terrible projectile would follow in the path of the light. And then suddenly it passed on—for the sapper who worked the lens could see nothing at that distance but the brown plain—and swept along the ranks of the sleeping army, rousing up the startled warriors, as a wind sweeps over a field of standing corn.

The soldiers of scientific war were assailed by no such terrors; yet the consciousness of the limitless possibilities of the morrow delayed the sleep that physical

weariness invited, and a desire to inspect the precautions for defence led me around the perimeter of the *zeriba*. The army had not formed a quadrilateral camp, as on other nights, but had lain down to rest in the formation for attack they had assumed in the afternoon. Every fifty yards behind the thorn-bushes were double sentries. Every hundred yards a patrol with an officer was to be met. Fifty yards in rear of this line lay the battalions, the men in all their ranks, armed and accoutred, but sprawled into every conceivable attitude which utter weariness could suggest or dictate. The full moon, rising early, displayed the whole scene. Imagination was stimulated; and I would set down some of my impressions and reflections, did I not fear that the cynical reader would observe that others had thought the same on similar occasions before.

A few military comments may, however, be permitted. The enemy, twice as strong as the Expeditionary Force, were within five miles. They had advanced that day with confidence and determination. When they halted, I gave them credit for more wit than they possessed. It seemed impossible to believe that they would attack by daylight across the open ground. Two explanations of their advance and halt presented themselves. Either they had offered battle in a position where they could not themselves be attacked until four o'clock in the afternoon, and hoped that the Sirdar's army, even though victorious, would have to fight a rearguard action in the darkness to the river; or they intended to make a night attack. It was not likely that an experienced commander would accept battle at

so late an hour in the day. If the Dervishes were anxious to attack, so much the worse for them. But the army would remain strictly on the defensive—at any rate, until there was plenty of daylight. The alternative remained—a night attack.

Here lay the great peril which threatened the expedition. What was to be done with the troops during the hours of darkness? In the daytime they recked little of their enemy. But at night, when 400 yards was the extreme range at which their fire could be opened, it was a matter of grave doubt whether the front could be kept and the attack repelled. The consequences of the line being penetrated in the darkness were appalling to think of. The sudden appearance of crowds of figures swarming to the attack through the gloom; the wild outburst of musketry and artillery all along the *zeriba*; the crowds still coming on in spite of the bullets; the fire getting uncontrolled, and then a great bunching and crumpling of some part of the front, and mad confusion, in which a multitude of fierce swordsmen would surge through the gap, cutting and slashing at every living thing; in which transport animals would stampede and rush wildly in all directions, upsetting every formation and destroying all attempts to restore order, in which regiments and brigades would shift for themselves and fire savagely on all sides, slaying alike friend and foe; and out of which only a few thousand, perhaps only a few hundred, demoralised men would escape in barges and steamers to tell the tale of ruin and defeat.

The picture—true or false—flamed before the eyes

of all the leaders that night; but, whatever their thoughts may have been, their tactics were bold. Whatever advice was given, whatever opinions were expressed, the responsibility was Sir Herbert Kitchener's. Upon his shoulders lay the burden, and the decision that was taken must be attributed solely to him. He might have formed the army into a solid mass of men and animals, arranged the infantry four deep all round the perimeter, and dug as big a ditch or built as high a *zeriba* as time allowed. He might have filled the numerous houses with the infantry, making them join the buildings with hasty entrenchments, and so enclose a little space in which to squeeze cavalry, transport, and guns. He did nothing of the sort. He formed his army in a long thin curve, resting on the river and enclosing a wide area of ground, about which baggage and animals were scattered in open order and luxurious accommodation. His line was but two deep; and only two companies per battalion and one Egyptian brigade (Collinson's) were in reserve. He thus obtained the greatest possible developement of fire, and waited, prepared if necessary to stake everything on the arms of precision, but hoping with fervour that he would not be compelled to gamble by night.

It was only necessary to walk round the *zeriba* to realise the position. It was neck or nothing. There were many anxious faces. Yet those who had seen a night attack before, trusted the musketry; and those who had warred long in the Soudan had confidence in the luck of the General and the conceit of the enemy. As for the Lancers, they were too tired to distrust

anyone; and having eaten their dinners, shaved themselves carefully in anticipation of the morning, and counted the horses who died of exhaustion—there were about a dozen—they lay down to sleep and thanked Heaven they were not generals and had nothing but their lives to lose.

The soldier may slumber, but the chronicler must persist in the inquiry. Sir H. Kitchener's dispositions for the night remained unproven. They were neither condemned by disaster nor sustained by success. The Khalifa, as the world knows, did not make a night attack. It is said that the messengers which the General sent from time to time to his camp with news of an impending attack by the British and Egyptian forces deterred him. This may have been the reason; but many will prefer to think, judging from past experience, that the Arabs detested the darkness and avoided a night attack on general principles. The question, nevertheless, remains: What would the result of such an attack have been? I feel myself compelled by the course of the narrative to pronounce. The opinion gains no weight from its author and must stand simply as an arrangement of words. The search-lights of the gunboats gave at least 1,000 yards' notice; the full moon allowed 400 yards of clear fire-space. The infantry were trained men, mostly experienced in war, and all confident in the weapons they held. Their weapons were of amazing power. The fire of musketry may produce great results at long range, but it increases in intensity as the distance shortens, and it is the last hundred yards that destroys the attack. If the

Dervishes had assaulted during the night, they would have been met with such a storm of bullets at short ranges that their slaughter would only have been the greater.

It is rather a poor compliment to the manhood of disciplined troops to say, as one distinguished military writer has said, that if the enemy had penetrated the *zeriba* the army would have been destroyed. Indeed, the struggle would then only have begun. Disciplined Europeans are difficult to kill. The Soudanese would have enjoyed the confused combat. The Egyptians would certainly have defended themselves with steadiness. It took nearly 14,000 Zulus more than three hours to exterminate 900 soldiers at Isandlwhana. Here were more than 20,000 bayonets, 7,000 of which were British. The brigades would have fallen back to the river-bank. There would have been very heavy losses—perhaps 3,000 men. But the morning light would have revealed the greater part of the force vengeful and undefeated. Hand-to-hand fighting cuts both ways. The Arab loss in the assault and afterwards would have been enormous. With the dawn the troops might assume the offensive, and, picking their way among the heaps of slain, would drive the surviving enemy from the field.

Fortified by such reflections, I slept. Others thought differently. Yet none were anxious to have the question decided, and all had doubts. The night was, however, undisturbed; and the moonlit camp, with its anxious generals, its weary soldiers, its fearful

machinery of destruction, all strewn along the bank of the great river, remained plunged in silence, as if brooding over the chances of the morrow and the failures of the past. And hardly four miles away another army—twice as numerous, equally confident, equally brave—was waiting impatiently for the morning and the final settlement of the long quarrel.

CHAPTER XIX

THE BATTLE OF OMDURMAN

SEPTEMBER 2, 1898

The dawn—The reconnaissance—The Dervish host—Their advance—The incoming tide—The beginning of the cannonade—The 'White Flags'—Within the *zeriba*—With the infantry—The machinery of death—Broadwood's cavalry action—The Camel Corps—The gunboat—The Horse battery—Collapse of the first attack—The 21st Lancers again—On the ridge—The explanation of their advance—The charge of the 21st Lancers—Some incidents—Private Byrne, V.C.—Death of Lieutenant Grenfell—The second phase—The march to Omdurman—The échelon—The field hospitals—The British division—The news of the charge—The Khalifa's attack on MacDonald—The Sirdar's counter-stroke—Death of Yakub—The attack from Kerreri—MacDonald's change of front—The Lincolns—Repulse of Osman and Ali—The death-ride of the Baggara cavalry—Flight of the Dervishes—The end of the battle.

THE bugles all over the camp by the river began to sound at half-past four. The cavalry trumpets and the drums and fifes of the British division joined the chorus, and everyone awoke amid a confusion of merry or defiant notes. The infantry, who had slept armed and accoutred in their ranks, had but to stand up. The cavalry indulged in a more elaborate toilet, and we dressed ourselves—many with especial care. Those who were callous, who had seen much war, or who were practical set themselves to eat enough to last till night. Then it grew gradually lighter, and the cavalry mounted their horses, the infantry stood to their arms, and the

gunners went to their batteries; while the sun, rising over the Nile, revealed the wide plain, the dark rocky hills, and the waiting army. It was as if all the preliminaries were settled, the ground cleared, and nothing remained but the final act and 'the rigour of the game.'

Even before it became light several squadrons of British and Egyptian cavalry were pushed swiftly forward to gain contact with the enemy and learn his intentions. The first of these, under Captain Baring, occupied Surgham Hill, and waited in the gloom until the whereabouts of the Dervishes should be disclosed by the dawn. It was a perilous undertaking, for he might have found them unexpectedly near.

As the sun rose, the 21st Lancers trotted out of the *zeriba* and threw out a spray of officers' patrols. With one of these it was my fortune to be sent to reconnoitre Surgham Hill. We galloped forward, and as we did not know that the Egyptian squadron and its officer had already looked over the ridge, we enjoyed all the excitement without any of the danger, and were also elated by the thought that we were the first to see what lay beyond. As there had been no night attack, I had expected that the Dervish army would have retired to their original position or entered the town. I rejected the idea that they would advance across the open ground to attack the *zeriba* by daylight, as it seemed absurd. Indeed, it appeared more probable that their hearts had failed them in the night, and that they had melted away into the deserts. But these anticipations were immediately dispelled by the scene which was visible from the crest of the ridge.

It was a quarter to six. The light was dim, but growing stronger every minute. There in the plain lay the enemy, their numbers unaltered, their confidence and intentions apparently unshaken. Their front was now nearly five miles long, and composed of great masses of men joined together by thinner lines. Behind and to the flanks were large reserves. From where I stood they looked dark blurs and streaks, relieved and diversified with an odd-looking shimmer of light from the spear-points.

After making the necessary reports I continued to watch the strange and impressive spectacle. As it became broad daylight—that is to say, about ten minutes to six—I suddenly realised that all the masses were in motion and advancing swiftly. Their Emirs galloped about and before their ranks. Scouts and patrols scattered themselves all over the front. Then they began to cheer. They were still a mile away from the hill, and were concealed from the Sirdar's army by the folds of the ground. The noise of the shouting was heard, albeit faintly, by the troops down by the river. But to us, watching on the hill, a tremendous roar came up in waves of intense sound, like the tumult of the rising wind and sea before a storm. In spite of the confidence which I felt in the weapons of civilisation—for all doubts had dispersed with the darkness—the formidable aspect of this great host of implacable savages, hurrying eagerly to the attack of the *zeriba*, provoked a feeling of loneliness, which was shared, I think, by the rest of the little patrol. Partly to clear the mind of such unnecessary emotions, and also

with the design of thereafter writing this account, I moved to a point on the ridge which afforded a view of both armies.

The British and Egyptian force was arranged in line with its back to the river. Its flanks were secured by the gunboats lying moored in the stream. Before it was the rolling sandy plain, looking from the slight elevation of the ridge smooth and flat as a table. To the right rose the rocky hills of the Kerreri position, near which the Egyptian cavalry were drawn up—a dark solid mass of men and horses. On the left the 21st Lancers, with a single squadron thrown out in advance, were halted watching their patrols, who climbed about Surgham Hill, stretched forward beyond it, or perched, as we did, on the ridge.

The ground sloped gently up from the river, so that it seemed as if the landward ends of the Surgham and Kerreri ridges curved in towards each other, enclosing what lay between. Beyond the long swell of sand which formed the western wall of this spacious amphitheatre the black shapes of the distant hills rose in misty confusion. The challengers were already in the arena; their antagonists swiftly approached.

Although the Dervishes were steadily advancing, a belief that their musketry was inferior encouraged a nearer view, and we trotted round the south-west slopes of Surgham Hill until we reached the sandhills on the enemy's side, among which the regiment had waited the day before. Thence the whole array was visible in minute detail. It seemed that every single man of all the thousands could be examined separately. The pace of

their march was fast and steady, and it was evident that it would not be safe to wait long among the sandhills. Yet the wonder of the scene exercised a dangerous fascination, and for a while we tarried.

The emblems of the more famous Emirs were easily distinguishable. On the extreme left the chiefs and soldiers of the Bright Green flag gathered under Ali-Wad-Helu; between this and the centre the large Dark Green flag of Osman Sheikh-ed-Din rose above a dense mass of spearmen, preceded by long lines of warriors armed presumably with rifles; over the centre, commanded by Yakub, the sacred Black banner of the Khalifa floated high and remarkable; while on the right a great square of Dervishes was arrayed under an extraordinary number of White flags, amid which the Red ensign of Sherif was almost hidden. All the pride and might of the Dervish Empire was massed on this last great day of its existence. Riflemen who had helped to destroy Hicks, spearmen who had charged at Abu Klea, Emirs who saw the sack of Gondar, Baggara fresh from raiding the Shillooks, warriors who had besieged Khartoum—all marched, inspired by the memories of former triumphs and embittered by the knowledge of late defeats, to chastise the impudent and accursed invaders.

The advance continued. The Dervish left began to stretch out across the plain towards Kerreri—as I thought, to turn our right flank. Their centre, under the Black Flag, moved directly towards Surgham. The right pursued a line of advance south of that hill, and would, I saw, pass over the ground on which I stood.

This mass of men was the most striking of all. They could not have mustered less than 6,000. Their array was perfect. They displayed a great number of flags —perhaps 500—which looked at the distance white, though they were really covered with texts from the Koran, and which by their admirable alignment made this division of the Khalifa's army look like the old representations of the Crusaders in the Bayeux tapestry. I called them at the moment the 'White Flags,' to distinguish them from the other masses, and that name will do as well as any other.

The attack developed. The left, nearly 20,000 strong, toiled across the plain and approached the Egyptian squadrons. The leading masses of the centre deployed facing the *zeriba* and marched forthwith to the direct assault. One small brigade of their great force—perhaps about 2,000 strong—halted 500 yards from my patrol. A few horsemen—dark-brown figures who moved about in their front—approached us so nearly that it was necessary to fire on them. This apparently annoyed the others, for they immediately paid us the compliment of detaching a score of riflemen to drive us from our point of observation. Meanwhile the Khalifa and his flag, surrounded by at least 10,000 men, were also drawing near. The tide was rising fast. One rock, one mound of sand after another was submerged by that human flood. It was time to go. Besides, the riflemen had now begun to find the range, and their bullets hummed overhead or knocked up the dust on the sandhills. It had long been desirable, it was now expedient, to move round the hill out of their

fire. We did so at a gallop, amid quite a splutter of musketry, and it was very fortunate that no one was hurt, for it would have been difficult to carry him off amid such circumstances.

We regained in safety our former position on the ridge. The Lancers, delighted at having been under fire—a new experience for all of them—were in high spirits. The enemy's centre was no longer visible; a spur of the hill now obstructed our view; but the 'White Flags' were of sufficient interest and importance to occupy the attention. As the whole Dervish army continued to advance, this division, which had until now been écheloned in rear of their right, moved up into the general line and began to climb the southern slopes of Surgham Hill. They, too, saluted us with musketry; but as the hill was within good artillery range of the *zeriba*, I knew that they would have something else to occupy their attention when they and their banners appeared over the shoulder and crest of the ridge, and we therefore remained spectators, sheltering among the rocks about 300 yards to their right flank. Meanwhile yet another body of the enemy, comparatively insignificant in numbers, who had been drawn up behind the 'White Flags,' was moving slowly towards the Nile, écheloned still further behind their right, and not far from the suburbs of Omdurman. These men had evidently been posted to prevent the Dervish army being cut off from the city and to secure their line of retreat; and with them the 21st Lancers were destined to have a much closer acquaintance about two hours later. My

attention was distracted from their movements by the loud explosion of artillery.*

The Dervish centre had come within range. But it was not the British and Egyptian army that began the battle. If there was one arm in which the Arabs were beyond all comparison inferior to their adversaries, it was in guns. Yet it was with this arm that they opened their attack. The eye travelled swiftly to the direction of the noise. In the middle of the Dervish line now marching in frontal assault were two puffs of smoke. I looked to the *zeriba*. About fifty yards short of the thorn fence two red clouds of sand and dust sprang up, where the projectiles had struck. It looked like a challenge. It was immediately answered. Great clouds of smoke appeared all along the front of the British and Soudanese brigades. One after another four batteries opened on the enemy at a range of about 3,000 yards. The sound of the cannonade rolled up to us on the ridge, and was re-echoed by the hills. Above the heads of the moving masses shells began to burst, dotting the air with smoke-balls and the ground with bodies. But they were nearly two miles away, and the distance rendered me unsympathetic. I had a nearer tragedy to witness. I looked back to the 'White Flags'; they were nearly over the crest. In another minute they would become visible to the batteries. Did they realise what would come to meet them? They were in a dense mass, 2,800 yards from the 32nd Field Battery and the gunboats. The ranges were known. It was a

* Map, 'Omdurman the First Attack,' to face page 128.

matter of machinery. The more distant slaughter passed unnoticed, as the mind was fascinated by the impending horror. I could see it coming. In a few seconds swift destruction would rush on these brave men. They topped the crest and drew out into full view of the whole army. Their white banners made them conspicuous above all. As they saw the camp of their enemies, they discharged their rifles with a great roar of musketry and quickened their pace, and I was alarmed to see a solitary British officer, Lieutenant Conolly, attached to the 21st, galloping across their front fifty feet below them, but at only a hundred yards' distance. He had been sent out to take a final look behind the hill. Fortunately he returned in safety, and with the necessary information. For a moment the white flags advanced in regular order, and the whole division crossed the crest and were exposed. Forthwith the gunboats, the 32nd British Field Battery, and other guns from the *zeriba* opened on them. I was but 400 yards away, and with excellent glasses could almost see the faces of the Dervishes who met the fearful fire. About twenty shells struck them in the first minute. Some burst high in the air, others exactly in their faces. Others, again, plunged into the sand and, exploding, dashed clouds of red dust, splinters, and bullets amid their ranks. The white banners toppled over in all directions. Yet they rose again immediately, as other men pressed forward to die for the Mahdi's sacred cause and in the defence of the successor of the True Prophet of the Only God. It was a terrible sight, for as yet they had not hurt us at

all, and it seemed an unfair advantage to strike thus cruelly when they could not reply. Nevertheless I watched the effect of the fire most carefully from a close and convenient position. About five men on the average fell to every shell: and there were many shells. Under their influence the mass of the 'White Flags' dissolved into thin lines of spearmen and skirmishers, and came on in altered formation and diminished numbers, but with unabated enthusiasm. And now, the whole attack being thoroughly exposed, it became the duty of the cavalry to clear the front as quickly as possible, and leave the further conduct of the debate to the infantry and the Maxim guns. All the patrols trotted or cantered back to their squadrons, and the regiment retired swiftly into the *zeriba*, while the shells from the gunboats screamed overhead and the whole length of the position began to burst into flame and smoke. Nor was it long before the tremendous banging of the artillery was swelled by the roar of musketry.

Taking advantage of the shelter of the river-bank, we dismounted, watered our horses, waited, and wondered what was happening. And every moment the tumult grew louder and more intense, until even the flickering stutter of the Maxims could scarcely be heard above the continuous din. Eighty yards away, and perhaps twenty feet above us, the 32nd Field Battery was in action. The nimble figures of the gunners darted about as they busied themselves in their complicated process of destruction. The officers, some standing on biscuit-boxes, peered through their glasses and studied the effect of the fire. Once a galloper

passed along the line with some message. But that and the left-flank companies of the Rifle Brigade—a brown double row of men monotonously firing volleys —was the extent of our vision; and we remained huddled up in the low ground, consumed with curiosity. I had, indeed, one glimpse. With another officer I built a pile of biscuit-boxes on the edge of the slope, and, climbing thereupon, obtained some view of the plain. Eight hundred yards away a ragged line of men was coming on desperately, struggling forward in the face of the pitiless fire—white banners tossing and collapsing; white figures subsiding in dozens to the ground; little white puffs from their rifles, larger white puffs spreading in a row all along their front from the bursting shrapnel. The picture lasted only a moment, but the memory remains for ever. Then a few bullets passed over our heads and we were ordered to rejoin our troops, though the sight was worth running many risks to see. Thereafter we were again compelled to wait.

But the chronicler lies under no such disabilities as oppress the subaltern of horse. He may—indeed, he must—make the campaign with every arm. Now it was the turn of the infantry. The long line of bayonets had been drawn up even before the sun had completely risen. The officers and men had watched the light grow in the plain, and had scanned the distant hills and nearer ridge with eager, anxious eyes. It made a great difference to them whether they were attacked in their impregnable position or had to clear the streets and houses of Omdurman—the difference probably between 200 killed and wounded and 2,000. They watched the

squadrons push out towards the hills, and might see the tiny patrols vanish on the further side; and then suddenly horsemen began to come back. Orderlies, bearing important news, returned—spurring their weary horses to a full gallop. A rumour ran along the line. The enemy were advancing. The squadrons in the plain turned and retired towards the *zeriba*. Patrols drew in from all sides, leaving the dark outlines of Surgham Hill again deserted, catching up their squadrons, and disappearing in the ranks. Presently the whole expanse of ground was bare and deserted; but not for long. One by one rows of flags appeared jerkily over a blur of dirty-white, which the field-glass developed into thousands of men. They approached, continually gaining ground to the left, and stretching out towards Kerreri. Then a forest of white banners appeared over the shoulder of Surgham ridge, and about the same time the guns began to fire on both sides. For a little while the infantry watched the shells exploding in the air in front of the attack. Nor, until a few strange balls of smoke flashing into existence high above their own heads admonished them, did they realise that all this was not only magnificent, but also war. Battalion by battalion—the Guards first at 2,700 yards, then the Seaforths at 2,000 yards, and the others following according to the taste and fancy of their commanding officers—the British division began to fire. As the range shortened Maxwell's Soudanese brigade, and a moment later MacDonald's, joined in the fusillade, until by 6.45 more than 12,000 infantry were engaged in that mechanical scattering of death which the polite

nations of the earth have brought to such monstrous perfection.

They fired steadily and stolidly, without hurry or excitement, for the enemy were far away and the officers careful. Besides, the soldiers were interested in the work and took great pains. But presently the mere physical act became tedious. The tiny figures seen over the slide of the back-sight seemed a little larger, but also fewer at each successive volley. The rifles grew hot—so hot that they had to be changed for those of the reserve companies. The Maxim guns exhausted all the water in their jackets, and several had to be refreshed from the water-bottles of the Cameron Highlanders before they could go on with their deadly work. The empty cartridge-cases, tinkling to the ground, formed small but growing heaps beside each man. And all the time out on the plain on the other side bullets were shearing through flesh, smashing and splintering bone; blood spouted from terrible wounds; valiant men were struggling on through a hell of whistling metal, exploding shells, and spurting dust—suffering, despairing, dying. Such was the first phase of the battle of Omdurman.

The Khalifa's plan of attack appears to have been complex and ingenious. It was, however, based on an extraordinary miscalculation of the power of modern weapons; with the exception of this cardinal error, it is not necessary to criticise it. He first ordered about 15,000 men, drawn chiefly from the army of Osman Sheikh-ed-Din and placed under the command of Osman Azrak, to deliver a frontal attack. He himself

waited with an equal force near Surgham Hill to watch the result. If it succeeded, he would move forward with his bodyguard, the flower of the Arab army, and complete the victory. If it failed, there was yet another chance. The Dervishes who were first launched against the *zeriba*, although very brave men, were not by any means his best or most reliable troops. Their destruction might be a heavy loss, but it would not end the struggle. While the attack was proceeding, the valiant left, consisting of the rest of the army of Osman Sheikh-ed-Din, might move unnoticed to the northern flank and curve round on to the front of the *zeriba* held by the Egyptian brigade. Ali-Wad-Helu was meanwhile to march to the Kerreri Hills, and remain out of range and, if possible, out of sight among them. Should the frontal and flank attacks be unhappily repulsed, the 'enemies of God,' exulting in their easy victory over the faithful, would leave their strong place and march to the capture and sack of the city. Then, while they were yet dispersed on the plain, with no *zeriba* to protect them, the chosen warriors of the True Religion would abandon all concealment, and hasten in their thousands to the utter destruction of the accursed—the Khalifa with 15,000 falling upon them from behind Surgham; Ali-Wad-Helu and all that remained of Osman's army assailing them from Kerreri. Attacked at once from the north and south, and encompassed on every side, the infidels would abandon hope and order, and Kitchener might share the fate of Hicks and Gordon. Two circumstances, which will appear as the account proceeds, prevented the accomplishment of

this plan. The second attack was not executed simultaneously by the two divisions of the Dervish army; and even had it been, the power of the musketry would have triumphed, and though the Expeditionary Force might have sustained heavier losses the main result could not have been affected. The last hopes of barbarism had passed with the shades of night.

Colonel Broadwood, with nine squadrons of cavalry, the Camel Corps, and the Horse Artillery, had been ordered to check the Dervish left, and prevent it enveloping the down-stream flank of the *zeriba*, as this was held by the Egyptian brigade, which it was not thought desirable to expose to the full weight of an attack. With this object, as the Dervishes approached, he had occupied the Kerreri ridge with the Horse battery and the Camel Corps, holding his cavalry in reserve in rear of the centre.

The Kerreri ridge, to which reference has so frequently been made, consists of two main features, which rise to the height of about 300 feet above the plain, are each above a mile long, and run nearly east and west, with a dip or trough about 1,000 yards wide between them. The eastern ends of these main ridges are perhaps 1,000 yards from the river, and in this intervening space there are several rocky under-features and knolls. The Kerreri hills, the spaces between them, and the smaller features are covered with rough boulders and angular stones of volcanic origin, which render the movements of horses and camels difficult and painful.

The cavalry horses and camels were in the dip between the two ridges; and the dismounted men of

the Camel Corps were deployed along the crest of the most southerly of the ridges, with their right at the desert end. Next in order to the Camel Corps, the centre of the ridge was occupied by the dismounted cavalry. The Horse Artillery were on the left. The remainder of the cavalry waited in the hollow behind the guns.

The tempestuous advance of Osman soon brought him into contact with the mounted force. His real intentions are still a matter of conjecture. Whether he had been ordered to attack the Egyptian brigade, or to drive back the cavalry, or to disappear behind the Kerreri Hills in conformity with Ali-Wad-Helu, is impossible to pronounce. His action was, however, clear. He could not safely assail the Egyptians with a powerful cavalry force threatening his left rear. He therefore continued his move across the front of the *zeriba*. Keeping out of the range of infantry fire, bringing up his right, and marching almost due north, he fell upon Broadwood. This officer, who had expected to have to deal with small bodies on the Dervish flank, found himself suddenly exposed to the attack of nearly 15,000 men, many of whom were riflemen. The Sirdar, seeing the situation from the *zeriba*, sent him an order to withdraw within the lines of infantry. Colonel Broadwood, however, preferred to retire through the Kerreri Hills to the northward, drawing Osman after him. He replied to that effect.

The first position had soon to be abandoned. The Dervishes, advancing in a north-easterly direction, attacked the Kerreri hills obliquely. They immediately

enveloped the right flank of the mounted troops holding them. It will be seen from the map that as soon as the Dervish riflemen gained a point west and in prolongation of the trough between the two ridges, they not only turned the right flank, but also threatened the retreat of the defenders of the southerly ridge; for they were able to sweep the trough from end to end with their fire. As soon as it became certain that the southerly ridge could not be held any longer, Colonel Broadwood retired the battery to the east end of the second or northern ridge. This was scarcely accomplished when the dip was enfiladed, and the cavalry and Camel Corps who followed lost about fifty men and many horses and camels killed and wounded. The Camel Corps were the most unfortunate. They were soon encumbered with wounded, and it was now painfully evident that in rocky ground the Dervishes could go faster on their feet than the soldiers on their camels. Pressing on impetuously at a pace of nearly seven miles an hour, and unchecked by a heavy artillery fire from the *zeriba* and a less effective fire from the Horse battery,[1] the Arabs rapidly diminished the distance between themselves and their enemies. Under these circumstances Colonel Broadwood decided to send the Camel Corps back to the *zeriba* under cover of a gunboat, which, watchfully observing the progress of the fight, was coming downstream to assist. The distance which divided the combatants was scarcely 400 yards and decreasing every minute. The cavalry were drawn up across the eastern

[1] The Horse battery were only armed with 7-pounder Krupps of an obsolete pattern.

or river end of the trough. The guns of the Horse battery fired steadily from their new position on the northern ridge. But the Camel Corps were still struggling in the broken ground, and it was clear that their position was one of great peril. The Dervishes already carpeted the rocks of the southern ridge with dull yellow swarms, and, heedless of the shells which still assailed them in reverse from the *zeriba*, continued to push their attack home. On the very instant that they saw the Camel Corps make for the river they realised that what they had deemed their prey was trying, like a hunted animal, to run to ground within the lines of infantry. With that instinctive knowledge of war which is the heritage of savage peoples, the whole attack swung to the right, changed direction from north to east, and rushed down the trough and along the southern ridge towards the Nile, with the plain intention of cutting off the Camel Corps and driving them into the river.

The moment was critical. It appeared to the cavalry commander that the Dervishes would actually succeed, and their success must involve the total destruction of the Camel Corps. That could not, of course, be tolerated. The whole nine squadrons of cavalry assumed a preparatory formation. The British officers believed that a terrible charge impended. They would meet in direct collision the swarms of men who were hurrying down the trough. The diversion might enable the Camel Corps to escape. But the ground was bad; the enemy's force was overwhelming; the Egyptian troopers were prepared

to obey—but that was all. There was no exalted enthusiasm such as at these moments carries sterner breeds to victory. Few would return. Nevertheless, the operation appeared inevitable. The Camel Corps were already close to the river. But thousands of Dervishes were running swiftly towards them at right angles to their line of retreat, and it was certain that if the camelry attempted to cross this new front of the enemy they would be annihilated. Their only hope lay in maintaining themselves by their fire near the river-bank until help could reach them, and, in order to delay and weaken the Dervish attack, the cavalry would have to make a desperate charge.

But at the critical moment the gunboat arrived on the scene and began suddenly to blaze and flame from Maxim guns, quick-firing guns, and rifles. The range was short; the effect tremendous. The terrible machine, floating gracefully on the waters—a beautiful white devil—wreathed itself in smoke. The river slopes of the Kerreri Hills, crowded with the advancing thousands, sprang up into clouds of dust and splinters of rock. The charging Dervishes sank down in tangled heaps. The masses in rear paused, irresolute. It was too hot even for them. The approach of another gunboat completed their discomfiture. The Camel Corps, hurrying along the shore, slipped past the fatal point of interception, and saw safety and the *zeriba* before them.

Exasperated by their disappointment, the soldiers of Osman Sheikh-ed-Din turned again upon the cavalry, and, forgetting in their anger the mobile nature of their

foe, pursued the elusive squadrons three long miles to the north. The cavalry, intensely relieved by the escape of the Camel Corps, played with their powerful antagonist, as the *banderilld* teases the bull.' Colonel Broadwood thus succeeded in luring this division of the Dervish army far away from the field of battle, where they were sorely needed. The rough ground, however, delayed the Horse battery. They lagged, as the Camel Corps had done, and caused constant anxiety. At length two of their guns stuck fast in a marshy spot, and as several men and horses were shot in the attempt to extricate them Broadwood wisely ordered them to be abandoned, and they were soon engulfed in the Dervish masses. Encouraged by this capture, the horsemen of Osman's command daringly attacked the retreating cavalry. But they were effectually checked by the charge of a squadron under Major Mahon.

Both gunboats, having watched the Camel Corps safely into the *zeriba*, now returned with the current and renewed their attack upon the Arabs. Opening a heavy and accurate fire upon their river flank, they drove them westward and away from the Nile. Through the gap thus opened Broadwood and his squadrons trotted to rejoin the main body, picking up on the way the two guns which had been abandoned. He had distinctly diverged from the Sirdar's orders, but his action, perilous as it was, had an important effect on the course of the whole engagement. For by the time Osman had recovered control of his angry men, had re-formed them, and had returned to the battlefield, his chance of useful action was for ever gone.

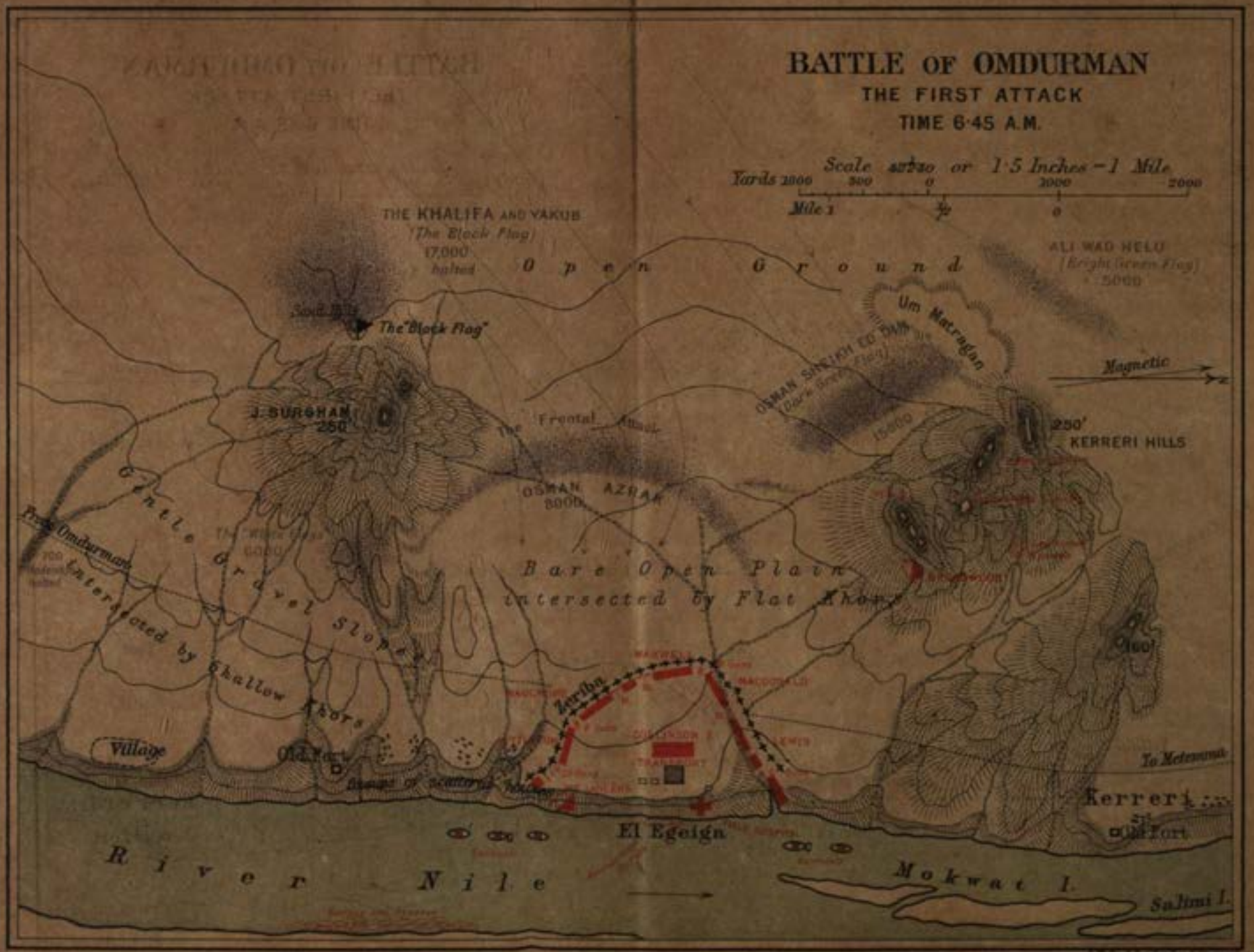
The Egyptian brigade had also been completely shielded from attack. The good understanding which existed between the Sirdar and his trusted cavalry leader alone rendered this beneficial disobedience possible. The paramount advantage of mutual confidence and intimate knowledge between the superior officers of an army is again strikingly displayed. Few generals have the good fortune to know their subordinates. Of all the advantages enjoyed by Sir Herbert Kitchener in the campaigns on the Nile, this was the greatest.

While these things were passing on the northern flank, the frontal attack was in progress. The *débris* of the 'White Flags' joined the centre, and the whole 14,000 pressed forward against the *zeriba*, gradually spreading out and abandoning their dense formations, and gradually slowing down. At about 800 yards from the British division the advance ceased, and they could make no headway. Opposite the Soudanese, who were armed only with the Martini-Henry rifle, the assailants came within 300 yards; and one brave old man, carrying a flag, fell at 150 paces from the shelter trench. But the result was conclusive all along the line. The attack was shattered. The leader, clad in his new *jibba* of many colours, rode on steadfastly towards the inexorable firing-line, until, pierced by several bullets, he fell lifeless. Such was the end of the stubborn warrior of many fights—wicked Osman Azrak, faithful unto death. The surviving Dervishes lay down on the ground. Unable to advance, they were unwilling to retire; and their riflemen, taking advantage of the folds of the plain, opened

and maintained an unequal combat. By eight o'clock it was evident that the whole attack had failed. The loss of the enemy was more than 2,000 killed, and perhaps as many wounded. To the infantry, who were busy with their rifles, it had scarcely seemed a fight. Yet all along the front bullets had whizzed over and into the ranks, and in every battalion there were casualties. Captain Caldecott of the Warwicks was killed; the Camerons had two officers, Captain Clarke and Lieutenant Nicholson, severely wounded; the Grenadiers one, Captain Bagot.[2] Colonel F. Rhodes, as he sat on his horse near the Maxim battery of the 1st British Brigade, was shot through the shoulder and carried from the field just as the attack reached its climax. There were, besides these officers, about 150 casualties among the soldiers.

Compared with the Dervish slaughter, the loss was insignificant; without such a comparison it would have been more appreciable. In any case, it was sufficient. I cannot sympathise with those who seem to regret that it was no greater. The reserve companies, who shared the danger without the absorbing occupation of shooting, declare that they heard plenty of bullets. Yet only a few hundred men were firing at the *zeriba*. The question arises irresistibly: What must the Dervishes have heard? Only those who were with the Prussian Guard on the glacis of St. Privat, or with Skobeleff in front of the Grivica Redoubt, can know; and they will never be able to make others realise what they

[2] For the full designations of these officers see the casualty list, page 198.



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suffered. For my part, I shall be content to live with my curiosity unsatisfied.

The attack had languished. The enemy's rifle fire continued, and as soon as the heavy firing ceased it began to be annoying. The ground, although it appeared flat and level to the eye, nevertheless contained depressions and swellings which afforded good cover to the sharpshooters, and the solid line behind the *zeriba* was an easy target. The artillery now began to clear out these depressions by their shells, and in this work they displayed a searching power very remarkable when their flat trajectory is remembered. As the shells burst accurately above the Dervish skirmishers and spearmen who were taking refuge in the folds of the plain, they rose by hundreds and by fifties to fly. Instantly the hungry and attentive Maxims and the watchful infantry opened on them, sweeping them all to the ground—some in death, others in terror. Again the shells followed them to their new concealment. Again they rose, fewer than before, and ran. Again the Maxims and the rifles spluttered. Again they fell. And so on until the front of the *zeriba* was clear of unwounded men for at least half a mile. A few escaped. Some, notwithstanding the vices of which they have been accused and the perils with which they were encompassed, gloriously carried off their injured comrades.

After the attack had been broken, and while the front of the *zeriba* was being cleared of the Dervish riflemen, the 21st Lancers were again called upon to act. The Sirdar and his generals were all agreed on

one point. They must occupy Omdurman before the Dervish army could get back there. They could fight as many Dervishes as cared to come in the plain; among the houses it was different. As the Khalifa had anticipated, the infidels, exulting in their victory, were eager, though for a different reason, to seize the city. And this they were now in a position to do. The Arabs were out in the deserts. A great part of their army was even as far away as Kerreri. The troops could move on interior lines. They were bound to reach Omdurman first. The order was therefore given to march on the city at once. But first the Surgham ridge must be reconnoitred, and the ground between the *zeriba* and Omdurman cleared of the Dervishes—with infantry if necessary, but with cavalry if possible, because that would be quicker.

As the fusillade slackened, the Lancers stood to their horses. Then General Gatacre, Captain Brooke, and the rest of his Staff came galloping along the rear of the line of infantry and guns, and shouted for Colonel Martin. There was a brief conversation—an outstretched arm pointing at the ridge—an order, and we were all scrambling into our saddles and straightening the ranks in high expectation. We started at a trot, two or three patrols galloping out in front, towards the high ground, while the regiment followed in mass—a great square block of ungainly brown figures and little horses, hung all over with water-bottles, saddle-bags, picketing-gear, tins of bully-beef, all jolting and jangling together; the polish of peace gone; soldiers without glitter; horsemen without grace; but still a regiment

of light cavalry in active operation against the enemy.

The crest of the ridge was only half a mile away. We found it unoccupied. The rocky mass of Surgham obstructed the view and concealed the great reserve collected around the Black Flag. But southward, between us and Omdurman, the whole plain was exposed. It was infested with small parties of Dervishes, moving about mounted and on foot, in tens and twenties. Three miles away a broad stream of fugitives, of wounded, and of deserters flowed from the Khalifa's army to the city. The mirages blurred and distorted the picture, so that some of the routed Arabs walked in air and some through water, and all were misty and unreal. But the sight was sufficient to excite the fiercest instincts of cavalry. Only the scattered parties in the plain appeared to prevent a glorious pursuit. The signalling officer, Lieutenant Clerk,[3] was set to heliograph back to the Sirdar that the ridge was unoccupied and that several thousand Dervishes could be seen flying into Omdurman. Pending the answer, we waited; and looking back northwards, across the front of the *zeriba*, I perceived, where the first attack had been stopped, a greyish-white smudge, perhaps a mile long. The glass disclosed details—hundreds of tiny white figures heaped or scattered; dozens hopping, crawling, staggering away; a few horses standing stolidly among the corpses; a few unwounded men dragging off their comrades. The skirmishers

* Plan, 'The Charge of the 21st Lancers,' to face page 144.

[3] Lieutenant C. J. Clerk, 21st Lancers.

among the rocks of Surgham soon began to fire at the regiment, and we sheltered among the mounds of sand, while a couple of troops replied with their carbines. Then the heliograph in the *zeriba* began to talk in flashes of light that opened and shut capriciously. The actual order is important. 'Advance,' said the helio, 'and clear the left flank, and use every effort to prevent the enemy re-entering Omdurman.' That was all, but it was sufficient. In the distance the enemy could be seen re-entering Omdurman in hundreds. There was no room for doubt. They must be stopped, and incidentally these small parties in the plain might be brushed away. We remounted; the ground looked smooth and unbroken; yet it was desirable to reconnoitre. Two patrols were sent out. The small parties of Dervishes who were scattered all over the plain and the slopes of the hill prevented anything less than a squadron moving, except at their peril. The first patrol, under Lieutenant Pirie, the Adjutant of the regiment, struck out towards Omdurman, and began to push in between the scattered Dervishes, who fired their rifles and showed great excitement. The other patrol, under Lieutenant Grenfell,[4] was sent to see what the ground looked like from further along the ridge and on the lower slopes of Surgham. The riflemen among the rocks turned their fire from the regiment to this nearer object. The five brown figures cantered over the rough ground, presenting difficult targets, but under continual fire, and disappeared round the spur. I expected casualties. However, in two or

[4] Lieutenant R. G. Grenfell, 12th Lancers.

three minutes they reappeared, the riflemen on the hill making a regular rattle of musketry, amid which the Lancers galloped safely back, followed last of all by their officer, who looked, I remember thinking at the time, as he picked his way composedly among the broken ground and tasted his first experience of war, the *beau-idéal* of the cavalry subaltern. He said that the plain looked as safe from the other side of the hill as from where we were. At this moment the other patrol returned. They, too, had had good fortune in their adventurous ride. Their information was exact. They reported that in a shallow and apparently practicable *khor* about three-quarters of a mile to the south-west, and between the regiment and the fugitives, there was drawn up a formed body of Dervishes about 1,000 strong. Colonel Martin decided on this information to advance and attack this force, which alone interposed between him and the Arab line of retreat. Then we started.

But all this time the enemy had been busy. At the beginning of the battle the Khalifa had posted a small force of 700 men on his extreme right, to prevent his line of retreat to Omdurman being harassed. This detachment was composed entirely of the Hadendoa tribesmen of Osman Digna's flag, and was commanded by one of his subordinate Emirs, who selected a suitable position in the shallow *khor*. As soon as the 21st Lancers left the *zeriba* the Dervish scouts on the top of Surgham carried the news to the Khalifa. It was said that the English cavalry were coming to cut him off from Omdurman. Abdullahi thereupon determined

to strengthen his extreme right; and he immediately ordered four regiments, each 500 strong, drawn from the force around the Black Flag and under the Emir Ibrahim Khalil, to reinforce the Hadendoa in the *khor*. While we were waiting for orders on the ridge these men were hurrying southwards along the depression, and concealed by a spur of Surgham Hill. The Lancer patrol reconnoitred the *khor*, at the imminent risk of their lives, while it was only occupied by the original 700 Hadendoa. Galloping back, they reported that it was held by about 1,000 men. Before they rejoined the regiment this number was increased to 2,700. This, however, we had no means of knowing. The Khalifa, having despatched his reinforcement, rode on his donkey with a scanty escort nearly half a mile from the Black Flag towards the *khor*, in order to watch the event, and in consequence he was within 500 yards of the scene.

As the 21st Lancers left the ridge, the fire of the Arab riflemen on the hill ceased. We advanced at a walk in mass for about 300 yards. The scattered parties of Dervishes fell back and melted away, and only one straggling line of men in dark blue waited motionless a quarter of a mile to the left front. They were scarcely a hundred strong. I marvelled at their temerity. The regiment formed into line of squadron columns, and continued at a walk until within 300 yards of this small body of Dervishes. I wondered what possessed them. Perhaps they wanted to surrender. The firing behind the ridges had stopped. There was complete silence, intensified by the recent tumult. Far beyond

the thin blue row of Dervishes the fugitives were visible streaming into Omdurman. And should these few devoted men impede a regiment? Yet it were wiser to examine their position from the other flank before slipping a squadron at them. The heads of the squadrons wheeled slowly to the left, and the Lancers, breaking into a trot, began to cross the Dervish front in column of troops. Thereupon and with one accord the blue-clad men dropped on their knees, and there burst out a loud, crackling fire of musketry. It was hardly possible to miss such a target at such a range. Horses and men fell at once. The only course was plain and welcome to all. The Colonel, nearer than his regiment, already saw what lay behind the skirmishers. He ordered 'Right wheel into line' to be sounded. The trumpet jerked out a shrill note, heard faintly above the trampling of the horses and the noise of the rifles. On the instant all the sixteen troops swung round and locked up into a long galloping line, and the 21st Lancers were committed to their first charge in war.

Two hundred and fifty yards away the dark-blue men were firing madly in a thin film of light-blue smoke. Their bullets struck the hard gravel into the air, and the troopers, to shield their faces from the stinging dust, bowed their helmets forward, like the Cuirassiers at Waterloo. The pace was fast and the distance short. Yet, before it was half covered, the whole aspect of the affair changed. A deep crease in the ground—a dry watercourse, a *khor*—appeared where all had seemed smooth, level plain; and from it there sprang, with the

suddenness of a pantomime effect and a high-pitched yell, a dense white mass of men nearly as long as our front and about twelve deep. A score of horsemen and a dozen bright flags rose as if by magic from the earth. Eager warriors sprang forward to anticipate the shock. The rest stood firm to meet it. The Lancers acknowledged the apparition only by an increase of pace. Each man wanted sufficient momentum to drive through such a solid line. The flank troops, seeing that they overlapped, curved inwards like the horns of a moon. But the whole event was a matter of seconds. The riflemen, firing bravely to the last, were swept head over heels into the *khor*, and jumping down with them, at full gallop and in the closest order, the British squadrons struck the fierce brigade with one loud furious shout. The collision was prodigious. Nearly thirty Lancers, men and horses, and at least two hundred Arabs were overthrown. The shock was stunning to both sides, and for perhaps ten wonderful seconds no man heeded his enemy. Terrified horses wedged in the crowd; bruised and shaken men, sprawling in heaps, struggled, dazed and stupid, to their feet, panted, and looked about them. Several fallen Lancers had even time to remount. Meanwhile the impetus of the cavalry carried them on. As a rider tears through a bullfinch, the officers forced their way through the press; and as an iron rake might be drawn through a heap of shingle, so the regiment followed. They shattered the Dervish array, and, their pace reduced to a walk, scrambled out of the *khor* on the further side, leaving a score of troopers behind them, and dragging on with the charge more than a thousand

Arabs. Then, and not till then, the killing began; and thereafter each man saw the world along his lance, under his guard, or through the back-sight of his pistol; and each had his own strange tale to tell.

Stubborn and unshaken infantry hardly ever meet stubborn and unshaken cavalry. Either the infantry run away and are cut down in flight, or they keep their heads and destroy nearly all the horsemen by their musketry. On this occasion two living walls had actually crashed together. The Dervishes fought manfully. They tried to hamstring the horses. They fired their rifles, pressing the muzzles into the very bodies of their opponents. They cut reins and stirrup-leathers. They flung their throwing-spears with great dexterity. They tried every device of cool, determined men practised in war and familiar with cavalry; and, besides, they swung sharp, heavy swords which bit deep. The hand-to-hand fighting on the further side of the *khor* lasted for perhaps one minute. Then the horses got into their stride again, the pace increased, and the Lancers drew out from among their antagonists. Within two minutes of the collision every living man was clear of the Dervish mass. All who had fallen were cut at with swords till they stopped quivering, but no artistic mutilations were attempted. The enemy's behaviour gave small ground for complaint.

Two hundred yards away the regiment halted, rallied, faced about, and in less than five minutes were re-formed and ready for a second charge. The men were anxious to cut their way back through their

enemies. We were alone together—the cavalry regiment and the Dervish brigade. The ridge hung like a curtain between us and the army. The general battle was forgotten, as it was unseen. This was a private quarrel. The other might have been a massacre; but here the fight was fair, for we too fought with sword and spear. Indeed, the advantage of ground and numbers lay with them. All prepared to settle the debate at once and for ever. But some realisation of the cost of our wild ride began to come to those who were responsible. Riderless horses galloped across the plain. Men, clinging to their saddles, lurched helplessly about, covered with blood from perhaps a dozen wounds. Horses, streaming from tremendous gashes, limped and staggered with their riders. In 120 seconds five officers, 65 men, and 119 horses out of less than 400 had been killed or wounded.

The Dervish line, broken by the charge, began to re-form at once. They closed up, shook themselves together, and prepared with constancy and courage for another shock. But on military considerations it was desirable to turn them out of the *khor* first and thus deprive them of their vantage-ground. The regiment again drawn up, three squadrons in line and the fourth in column, now wheeled to the right, and, galloping round the Dervish flank, dismounted and opened a heavy fire with their magazine carbines. Under the pressure of this fire the enemy changed front to meet the new attack, so that both sides were formed at right angles to their original lines. When the Dervish change of front was completed, they began to

advance against the dismounted men. But the fire was accurate, and there can be little doubt that the moral effect of the charge had been very great, and that this brave enemy was no longer unshaken. Be this as it may, the fact remains that they retreated swiftly, though in good order, towards the ridge of Surgham Hill, where the Khalifa's Black Flag still waved, and the 21st Lancers remained in possession of the ground—and of their dead.

Such is the true and literal account of the charge. I have described the event in detail, and at a length perhaps scarcely warranted by its importance. Yet, although the engagement is still in progress, the reader may perhaps care to hear a few incidents of valour and adventure. Colonel Martin, busy with the direction of his regiment, drew neither sword nor revolver, and rode through the press unarmed and uninjured. Major Crole Wyndham [5] had his horse shot under him by a Dervish who pressed its muzzle into its hide before firing. From out of the middle of that savage crowd the officer fought his way on foot and escaped in safety. Lieutenant Wormald, of the 7th Hussars, thrust at a man with his sword, and that weapon, by a well-known London maker, bent double and remained thus. I myself saw Sergeant Freeman trying to collect his troop after the charge. His face was cut to pieces, and as he called on his men to rally, the whole of his nose, cheeks, and lips flapped amid red bubbles. Surely some place might have been found in any roll of honour for such a man!

[5] Major W. G. Crole Wyndham, *p.s.c.*, 21st Lancers.

Lieutenant Molyneux[6] fell in the *khor* into the midst of the enemy. In the confusion he disentangled himself from his horse, drew his revolver, and jumped out of the hollow before the Dervishes recovered from the impact of the charge. Then they attacked him. He fired at the nearest, and at the moment of firing was slashed across the right wrist by another. The pistol fell from his nerveless hand, and being wounded, dismounted, and disarmed, he turned in the hopes of regaining, by following the line of the charge, his squadron, which was just getting clear. Hard upon his track came the enemy, eager to make an end. Beset on all sides, and thus hotly pursued, the wounded officer perceived a single Lancer riding across his path. He called on him for help. Whereupon the trooper, Private Byrne, although already severely wounded by a bullet which had penetrated his right arm, replied without a moment's hesitation and in a cheery voice, 'All right, sir!' and turning, rode at four Dervishes, who were about to kill his officer. His wound, which had partly paralysed his arm, prevented him from grasping his sword, and at the first ineffectual blow it fell from his hand, and he received another wound from a spear in the chest. But his solitary charge had checked the pursuing Dervishes. Lieutenant Molyneux regained his squadron alive, and the trooper, seeing that his object was attained, galloped away, reeling in his saddle. Arrived at his troop, his desperate condition was noticed, and he was told to fall out. But this he refused to do, urging that he was entitled to remain on

[6] Lieutenant Hon. R. F. Molyneux, Royal Horse Guards.

duty and have 'another go at them.' At length he was compelled to leave the field, fainting from loss of blood.

When the whole facts of this case are dispassionately considered, there will be few who can recall an act of greater devotion or can imagine a braver man than Byrne. The spectacle of this soldier, crippled, practically helpless, riding—to save his officer—single-handed to the attack of four Dervishes, and back into the hell from which he had once escaped, will not pale before the finest stories of antiquity or romance. The war in the Soudan, where troops have been handled in large numbers and in formed bodies—unlike the war on the Indian frontier—has not afforded many opportunities for personal courage and conduct. But if the public were desirous of making one man the physical hero of the River War in its last three campaigns, they would not find an unworthy Paladin in this brave Irish soldier. He has since received the Victoria Cross, and his wearing it will rather enhance the value of that order.

Lieutenant Nesham[7] had an even more extraordinary escape than Molyneux. He had scrambled out of the *khor* when, as his horse was nearly stopping, an Arab seized his bridle. He struck at the man with his sword, but did not prevent him cutting his off-rein. The officer's bridle-hand, unexpectedly released, flew out, and, as it did so, a swordsman at a single stroke nearly severed it from his body. Then they cut at him from all sides. One blow shore through his helmet and grazed his head. Another

[7] Lieutenant C. S. Nesham, 21st Lancers.

inflicted a deep wound in his right leg. A third, intercepted by his shoulder-chains, paralysed his right arm. Two more, missing him narrowly, cut right through the cantel of the saddle and into the horse's back. The wounded subaltern—he was the youngest of all—reeled. A man on either side seized his legs to pull him to the ground. The long spurs struck into the horse's flanks, and the maddened animal, throwing up its head and springing forward, broke away from the crowd of foes, and carried the rider—bleeding, fainting, but still alive—to safety among the rallying squadrons. Lieutenant Nesham's experience was that of the men who were killed, only that he escaped to describe it.

I have written thus of others, and vanity encourages the belief that the reader may care to know something of my own fortunes. I would willingly gratify his desire—and mine—were it not that in such circumstances my luck is of a negative character. As on another occasion, I came safely through, one of the very few officers whose saddlery, clothes, or horse were untouched, and without any incident that is worth while putting down here.

Two impressions I will, however, record. The whole scene flickered exactly like a cinematograph picture; and, besides, I remember no sound. The event seemed to pass in absolute silence. The yells of the enemy, the shouts of the soldiers, the firing of many shots, the clashing of sword and spear, were unnoticed by the senses, unregistered by the brain. Several others say the same. Perhaps it is possible for the whole of a man's faculties to be concentrated

in the eye, bridle-hand, and trigger-finger, and withdrawn from all other parts of the body.

It was not until after the squadrons had re-formed that I heard of the death of Lieutenant Grenfell of the 12th Lancers. This young officer, who to great personal charm and high courage added talents and industry which gave promise of a successful and even a famous military career, and who had just before the charge reconnoitred the enemy under a hot fire in a manner that excited general admiration, had been cut down and killed. And at this shocking news the exhilaration of the gallop, the excitement of the moment, the joy and triumph of successful combat, faded from the mind; and the realisation came home with awful force that war, disguise it as you may, is but a dirty, shoddy business, which only a fool would undertake. Nor was it until the night that I again recognised that there are some things that have to be done, no matter what the cost may be. With this reflection, and with the knowledge that he felt, probably, little pain; certainly, no fear; Robert Grenfell's friends—among whom I am sorrowfully proud to count myself—may, indeed must, be content. Captain Kenna[8] and Lieutenant de Montmorency, who made a courageous attempt to recover the body, have since received the Victoria Cross. Corporal Swarbrick, who assisted them, was awarded—I know not on what grounds of discrimination—the Distinguished Service medal.

The Lancers remained in possession of the dearly bought ground. There was not much to show that

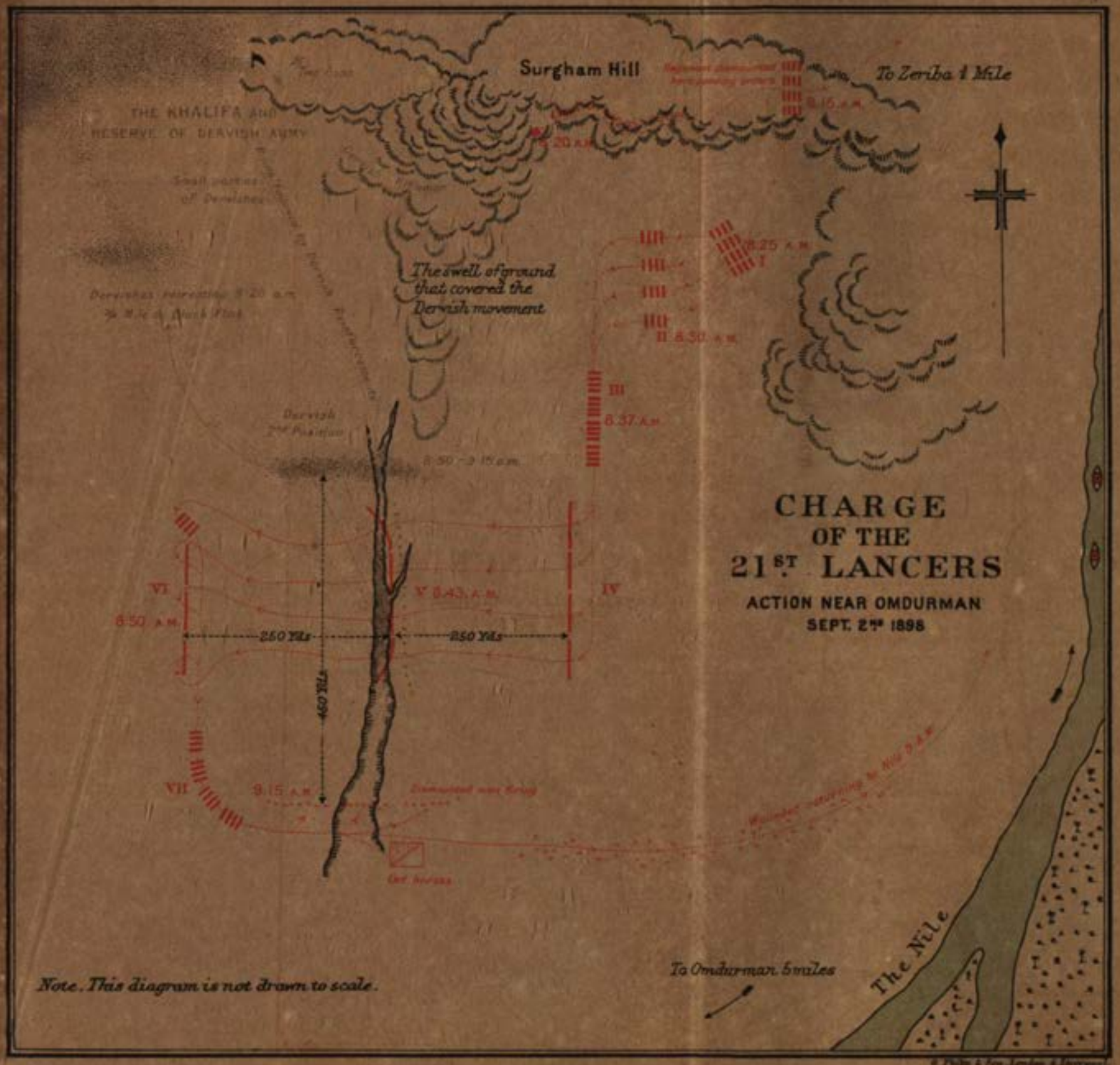
[8] Captain P. A. Kenna, 21st Lancers.

there had been a desperate fight. A quarter of a mile away nothing would have been noticed. Close to, the scene looked like a place where rubbish is thrown, or where a fair has recently been held. White objects, like dirty bits of newspaper, lay scattered here and there—the bodies of the enemy. Brown objects, almost the colour of the earth, like bundles of dead grass or heaps of manure, were also dotted about—

AFTER THE CHARGE

the bodies of soldiers. Among these were goat-skin water-bottles, broken weapons, torn and draggled flags, cartridge-cases. In the foreground lay a group of dead horses and several dead or dying donkeys. It was all litter.

We gathered reverently the poor remains of what had but a quarter of an hour before been the educated soldiers of a civilising Empire, grieved at their



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frightful wounds. The wounded were sent with a small escort towards the river and hospitals. An officer, Second Lieutenant Brinton,[9] was despatched with the news to the Sirdar. Then we remounted, and I observed, looking at my watch, that it was half-past nine; only breakfast-time, that is to say, in distant comfortable England. I daresay it occurred to others who were unhurt that there was still plenty of time. At any rate, I deferred my thanks until a later hour; and on the instant, as if to approve the prudence of the neglect, both cannonade and fusillade broke out again behind the ridge, and grew in a crashing crescendo until the whole landscape seemed to vibrate with the sound of explosions. The second phase of the battle had begun.

Even before the 21st Lancers had reconnoitred Surgham ridge, the Sirdar had set his brigades in motion towards Omdurman. He was determined, even at a very great risk, to occupy the city while it was empty and before the army in the plain could return to defend it. The advantage might be tremendous. Nevertheless the movement was premature. The Khalifa still remained undefeated west of Surgham Hill. Ali-Wad-Helu lurked behind Kerreri; Osman was rapidly re-forming. There were still at least 35,000 men on the field. Nor, as the event proved, was it possible to enter Omdurman until they had been beaten.

As soon as the infantry had replenished their ammunition, they wheeled to the left in échelon of brigades,

[9] Second Lieut. O. W. Brinton, 21st Lancers.

and began to march towards Surgham ridge. The movements of a great force are slow. It was not desirable that the British division, which led the échelon, should remain in the low ground north of Surgham—where it was commanded, had no field of fire, and could see nothing—and accordingly both these brigades moved forward almost together to occupy the crest of the ridge. Thus two steps of the ladder were run into one, and Maxwell's brigade, which followed Wauchope's, was 600 yards further south than it would have been had the regular échelon been observed. In the *zeriba* MacDonald had been next to Maxwell. But a very significant change in the order was now made. General Hunter evidently conceived the rear of the échelon threatened from the direction of Kerreri. Had the earth swallowed all the thousands who had moved across the plain towards the hills? At any rate, he would have his best brigade and his most experienced general in the post of possible danger. At any rate, the Egyptians should not be exposed. He therefore ordered Lewis's brigade to follow Maxwell, and left MacDonald last of all, strengthening him with three batteries of artillery and eight Maxim guns. Collinson marched with the transport. MacDonald moved out westward into the desert to take his place in the échelon, and also to allow Lewis to pass him as ordered.* Lewis hurried on after Maxwell, and, taking his distance from him, was thus also 600 yards further south than the regular échelon admitted. The step which had been absorbed when both British brigades moved off—

* Map, 'Omdurman: the Khalifa's Attack,' to face page 154.

advisedly—together, caused a double gap between MacDonald and the rest of the army. And this distance was further increased by the fact that while he was moving west, to assume his place in correct échelon, the other five brigades were drawing off to the southward. I am not seeking to criticise, but only to explain, MacDonald's isolation.

At 9.15 the whole army was marching south in échelon, with the rear brigade at rather more than double distance. Collinson had already started with the transport, but the field hospitals still remained in the deserted *zeriba*, busily packing up. The medical staff had about 150 wounded on their hands. The Sirdar's orders had been that these were to be placed on the hospital barges, and that the field hospitals were to follow the transport. But the moving of wounded men is a painful and delicate affair, and by a stupid and grievous mistake the three regular hospital barges, duly prepared for the reception of the wounded, had been towed across to the right bank. It was necessary to use three ammunition barges, which, although in no way arranged for the reception of wounded, were luckily at hand. Meanwhile time was passing, and the doctors, who worked with devoted energy, became suddenly aware that, with the exception of a few detachments from the British division and three Egyptian companies, there were no troops within half a mile, and none between them and the dark Kerreri Hills. The two gunboats who could have guarded them from the river were downstream, helping the cavalry; MacDonald with the rear brigade was out in the plain;

Collinson was hurrying along the bank with his transport. They were alone and unprotected. The army and the river together formed a huge V pointing south. The northern extremity—the gorge of the redan, as it were—gaped open towards Kerreri; and from Kerreri there now began to come, like the first warning drops before a storm of rain, small straggling parties of Dervish cavalry. The interior of the V was soon actually invaded by these predatory patrols, and one troop of perhaps a score of Baggara horse watered their ponies within 300 yards of the unprotected hospitals. Behind, in the distance, the banners of an army began to reappear. The situation was alarming. The wounded were bundled on to the barges, although, since there was no steamer to tow them, they were scarcely any safer when embarked. While some of the medical officers were thus busied, Colonel Sloggett[10] galloped off, and, running the gauntlet of the Baggara horsemen, hurried to claim protection for the hospitals and their helpless occupants. In the midst of this excitement and confusion the wounded from the cavalry charge began to trickle in.

When the British division had moved out of the *zeriba*, a few skirmishers among the crags of Surgham Hill alone attested the presence of an enemy. Each brigade, formed in four parallel columns of route, which closed in until they were scarcely forty paces apart, and both at deploying interval—the second brigade nearest the river, the first almost in line with it and on its right—hurried on, eager to see what lay beyond the

[10] Colonel A. T. Sloggett, R.A.M.C.

ridge. All was quiet, except for a few 'sniping' shots from the top of Surgham. But gradually as Maxwell's brigade—the third in the échelon—approached the hill, these shots became more numerous, until the summit of the peak was spotted with smoke-puffs. The British division moved on steadily, and, leaving these bold skirmishers to the Soudanese, soon reached the crest of the ridge. At once and for the first time

THE GRENADIERS HELIOGRAPH

the whole panorama of Omdurman—the brown and battered dome of the Mahdi's Tomb, the multitude of mud houses, the glittering fork of water which marked the confluence of the rivers—burst on their vision. For a moment they stared entranced. Then their attention was distracted; for trotting, galloping, or halting and gazing stupidly about them, terrified and bewildered, a dozen riderless troop-horses appeared over the further crest—for the ridge was flat-topped—coming from the

plain, as yet invisible, below. It was the first news of the Lancers' charge. Details soon followed in the shape of the wounded, who in twos and threes began to make their way between the battalions, all covered with blood and many displaying most terrible injuries —faces cut to rags, bowels protruding, fishhook spears still stuck in their bodies—realistic pictures from the darker side of war. Thus absorbed, the soldiers hardly noticed the growing musketry fire from the peak. But suddenly the bang of a field-gun set all heads looking backward. A battery had unlimbered in the plain between the *zeriba* and the ridge, and was beginning to shell the summit of the hill. The report of the guns seemed to be the signal for the whole battle to reopen. From far away to the right rear there came the sound of loud and continuous infantry firing, and immediately Gatacre halted his division.

Almost before the British had topped the crest of the ridge, before the battery had opened from the plain, while Colonel Sloggett was still spurring across the dangerous ground between the river and the army, the Sirdar knew that his enemy was again upon him. Looking back from the slopes of Surgham, he saw that MacDonald, instead of continuing his march in échelon, had halted and deployed. The veteran Brigadier had seen the Dervish formations on the ridge to the west of Surgham, realised that he was about to be attacked, and, resolving to anticipate the enemy, immediately brought his three batteries into action at 1,200 yards. Five minutes later the whole of the Khalifa's reserve, 15,000 strong, led by Yakub with the Black Flag,

G. Lévégian & Co. photo. W. L. Cotts photo. sc.

H. R. Macdonald

the bodyguard, and 'all the glories' of the Dervish Empire, surged into view from behind the hill and advanced on the solitary brigade with the vigour of the first attack and thrice its chances of success. Thereupon Sir Herbert Kitchener began to throw his brigades about as if they were companies. I discern no wonderful skill in the manœuvres, but they were certainly those of a man entirely unmoved either by the emergency or the scale of the event.

He ordered Maxwell to change front to the right and storm Surgham Hill. He sent Major Sandbach [11] to tell Lewis to conform and come into line on Maxwell's right. He galloped himself to the British division—conveniently halted by General Gatacre on the northern crest of the ridge—and ordered Lyttelton with the second brigade to form facing west on Maxwell's left south of Surgham, and Wauchope with the first brigade to hurry back to fill the wide gap between Lewis and MacDonald. Last of all he sent an officer to Collinson and the Camel Corps with orders that they should swing round to their right rear and close the open part of the V. By these movements the army, instead of facing south in échelon, with its left on the river and its right in the desert, was made to face west in line, with its left in the desert and its right reaching back to the river. It had turned nearly a complete somersault.*

In obedience to these orders Lyttelton's brigade brought up their left shoulders, deployed into line, and advanced west; Maxwell's Soudanese scrambled up the

[11] Major A. E. Sandbach, R.E.

* Map, 'Omdurman: the Attack on MacDonald,' to face page 156.

Surgham rocks, and, in spite of a sharp fire, cleared the peak with the bayonet and pressed on down the further side; Lewis began to come into action on Maxwell's right; MacDonald, against whom the Khalifa's attack was at first entirely directed, remained facing south-west, and was soon shrouded in the smoke of his own musketry and artillery fire. The three brigades which were now moving west and away from the Nile attacked the right flank of the Dervishes assailing MacDonald, and, compelling them to form front towards the river, undoubtedly took much of the weight of the attack off the isolated brigade. There remained the gap between Lewis and MacDonald. But Wauchope's brigade—still in four parallel columns of route—had shouldered completely round to the north, and was now doubling swiftly across the plain to fill the unguarded space. With the exception of Wauchope's brigade and of Collinson's Egyptians, the whole infantry and artillery force was at once furiously engaged.

The firing became again tremendous, and the sound was even louder than during the attack on the *zeriba*. As each fresh battalion was brought into line the tumult steadily increased. The three leading brigades continued to advance westward in one long line looped up over Surgham Hill, and with the right battalion held back in column. As the forces gradually drew nearer, the possibility of the Dervishes penetrating the gap between Lewis and MacDonald presented itself, and the flank battalion was wheeled into line so as to protect the right flank. The aspect of the Dervish attack was at this moment most formidable. Enormous masses of

men were hurrying towards the smoke-clouds that almost hid MacDonald. Other masses turned to meet the attack which was developing on their right. Within the angle formed by the three brigades facing west and MacDonald facing nearly south a great army of not less than 15,000 men was enclosed, like a flock of sheep in a fold, by the thin brown lines of the British and Egyptian brigades. As the 7th Egyptians, the right battalion of Lewis's brigade and nearest the gap between that unit and MacDonald, deployed to protect the flank, they became unsteady, began to bunch and waver, and actually made several retrograde movements. This was the only battalion in the army not commanded by a British officer. There was a moment of danger; but General Hunter, who was on the spot, himself ordered the two reserve companies of the 15th Egyptians under Major Hickman to march up behind them with fixed bayonets. Their *morale* was thus restored and the peril averted. The advance of the three brigades continued.

Yakub found himself utterly unable to withstand the attack from the river. His own attack on MacDonald languished. The musketry was producing terrible losses in his crowded ranks. The valiant Wad Bishara and many other less famous Emirs fell dead. Gradually he began to give ground. It was evident that the civilised troops were the stronger. But even before the attack was repulsed, the Khalifa, who watched from a close position, must have known that the day was lost; for when he launched Yakub at MacDonald, it was clear that the only chance

of success depended on Ali-Wad-Helu and Osman Sheikh-ed-Din attacking at the same time from Kerreri. And with bitter rage and mortification he perceived that, although the banners were now gathering under the Kerreri Hills, Ali and Osman were too late, and the attacks which should have been simultaneous would only be consecutive. The effect of Broadwood's cavalry action upon the extreme right was now becoming apparent.

Regrets and fury were alike futile. The three brigades advancing drove the Khalifa's Dervishes back into the desert. Along a mile of front an intense and destructive fire flared and crackled. The 32nd British Field Battery on the extreme left was drawn by its hardy mules at full gallop into action. The Maxim guns pulsated feverishly. Two were even dragged by the enterprise of a subaltern to the very summit of Surgham, and from this elevated position intervened with bloody effect. Thus the long line moved forward in irresistible strength. In the centre, under the red Egyptian flag, careless of the bullets which that conspicuous emblem drew, and which inflicted some loss among those around him, rode the Sirdar, stern and sullen, equally unmoved by fear or enthusiasm. A mile away to the rear the gunboats, irritated that the fight was passing beyond their reach, steamed restlessly up and down, like caged Polar bears, seeking what they might devour. Before that terrible line the Khalifa's division began to break up. The whole ground was strewn with dead and wounded, among whose bodies the soldiers picked their steps with the customary

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Soudan precautions. Surviving thousands struggled away towards Omdurman and swelled the broad stream of fugitives upon whose flank the 21st Lancers already hung vengefully. Yakub and the defenders of the Black Flag disdained to fly, and perished where they stood, beneath the holy ensign, so that when their conquerors reached the spot the dark folds of the banner waved only over the dead.

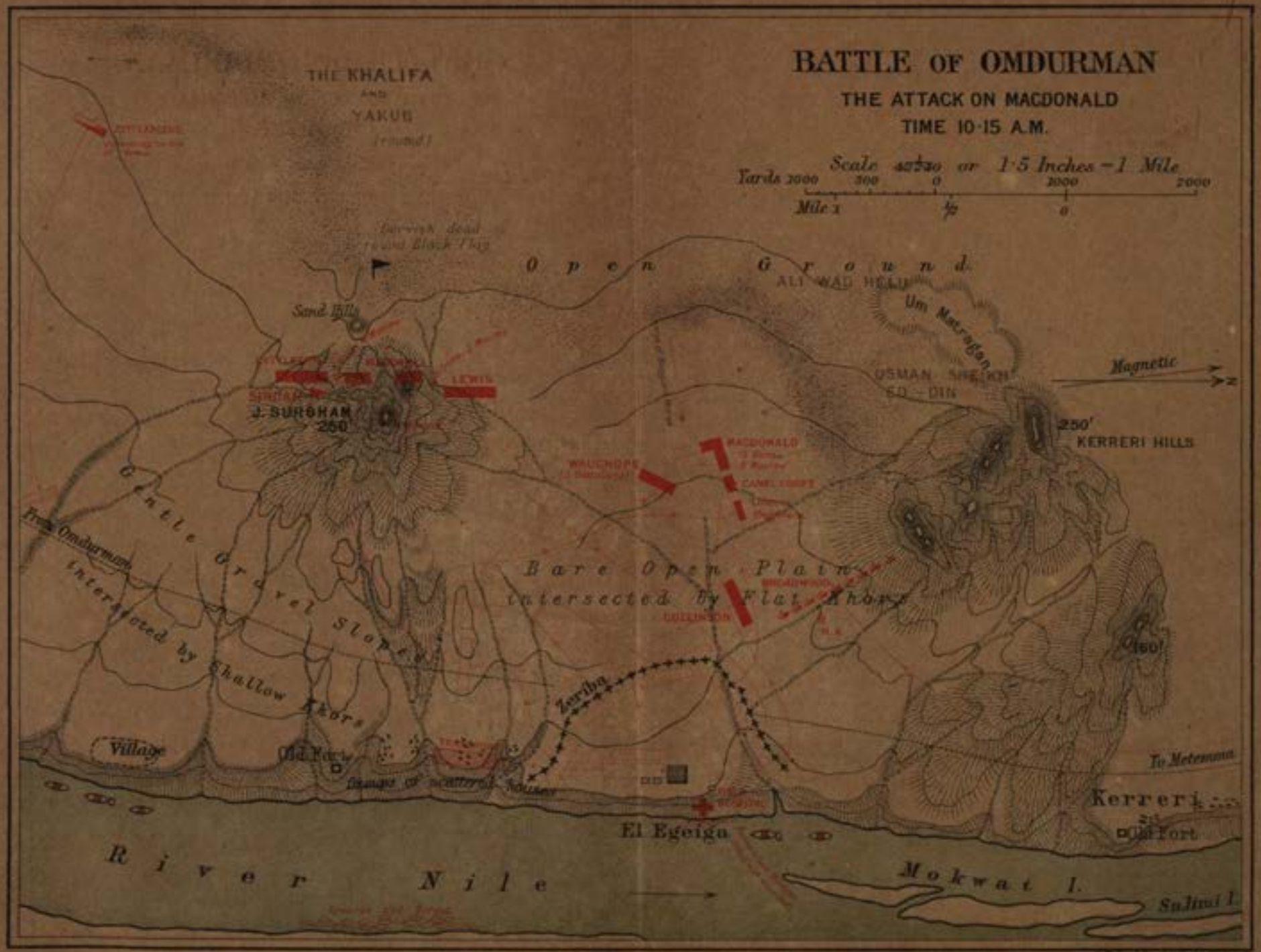
While all this was taking place—for events were moving at speed—the 1st British Brigade was still doubling across the rear of Maxwell and Lewis to fill the gap between the latter and MacDonald. As they had wheeled round, the regiments gained on each other according to their proximity to the pivot flank. The brigade assumed a formation which may be described as an échelon of columns of route, with the Lincolns, who were actually the pivot regiment, leading. By the time that the right of Lewis's brigade was reached and the British had begun to deploy, it was evident that the Khalifa's attack was broken and that his force was in full retreat. In the near foreground the Arab dead lay thickly. Crowds of fugitives were trooping off in the distance. The Black Flag alone waved defiantly over the corpses of its defenders. In the front of the brigade the fight was over. But those who looked away to the right saw a different spectacle.* What appeared to be an entirely new army was coming down from the Kerreri Hills. While the soldiers looked and wondered, fresh orders arrived. A mounted officer galloped up. There was a report that terrible events were happening in the dust

* Map, 'Omdurman: the Attack on MacDonald,' to face page 156.

and smoke to the northward. The spearmen had closed with MacDonald's brigade; were crumpling his line from the flank; had already broken it. Such were the rumours. The orders were more precise. The nearest regiment—the Lincolnshire—was to hurry to MacDonald's threatened flank to meet the attack. The rest of the brigade was to change front half right, and remain in support. The Lincolnshires, breathless but elated, forthwith started off again at the double. They began to traverse the rear of MacDonald's brigade, dimly conscious of rapid movements by its battalions, and to the sound of tremendous independent firing, which did not, however, prevent them from hearing the venomous hiss of bullets.

Had the Khalifa's attack been simultaneous with that which was now developed, the position of MacDonald's brigade must have been almost hopeless. In the actual event it was one of extreme peril. The attack in his front was weakening every minute, but the far more formidable attack on his right rear grew stronger and nearer in inverse ratio. Both attacks must be met. The moment was critical; the danger near. All depended on MacDonald, and that officer, who by valour and conduct in war had won his way from the rank of a private soldier to the command of a brigade, and will doubtless obtain still higher employment, was equal to the emergency.

To meet the Khalifa's attack he had arranged his force facing south-west, with three battalions in line and the fourth held back in column of companies in rear



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of the right flank—an inverted L-shaped formation.* As the attack from the south-west gradually weakened and the attack from the north-west continually increased, he broke off his battalions and batteries from the longer side of the L and transferred them to the shorter. He timed these movements so accurately that each face of his brigade was able to exactly sustain the attacks of the enemy. As soon as the Khalifa's force began to waver he ordered the XIth Soudanese and a battery on his left to move across the angle in which the brigade was formed, and deploy along the shorter face to meet the impending onslaught of Ali-Wad-Helu. Perceiving this, the IXth Soudanese, who were the regiment in column on the right of the original front, wheeled to the right from column into line without waiting for orders, so that two battalions faced towards the Khalifa and two towards the fresh attack. By this time it was clear that the Khalifa was practically repulsed, and MacDonald ordered the Xth Soudanese and another battery to change front and prolong the line of the IXth and XIth. He then moved the 2nd Egyptians diagonally to their right front, so as to close the gap at the angle between their line and that of the three other battalions. These difficult manœuvres were carried out under a heavy fire, which in twenty minutes caused over 120 casualties in the four battalions—exclusive of the losses in the artillery batteries—and in the face of the determined attacks of an enemy who outnumbered the troops by seven to one and had only to close with them to be victorious. Amid the roar of the firing and

Plan, 'Omdurman: MacDonald's Change of Front,' to face page 160.

the dust, smoke, and confusion of the change of front, the General found time to summon the officers of the IXth Soudanese around him, rebuked them for having wheeled into line in anticipation of his order, and requested them to drill more steadily in brigade.

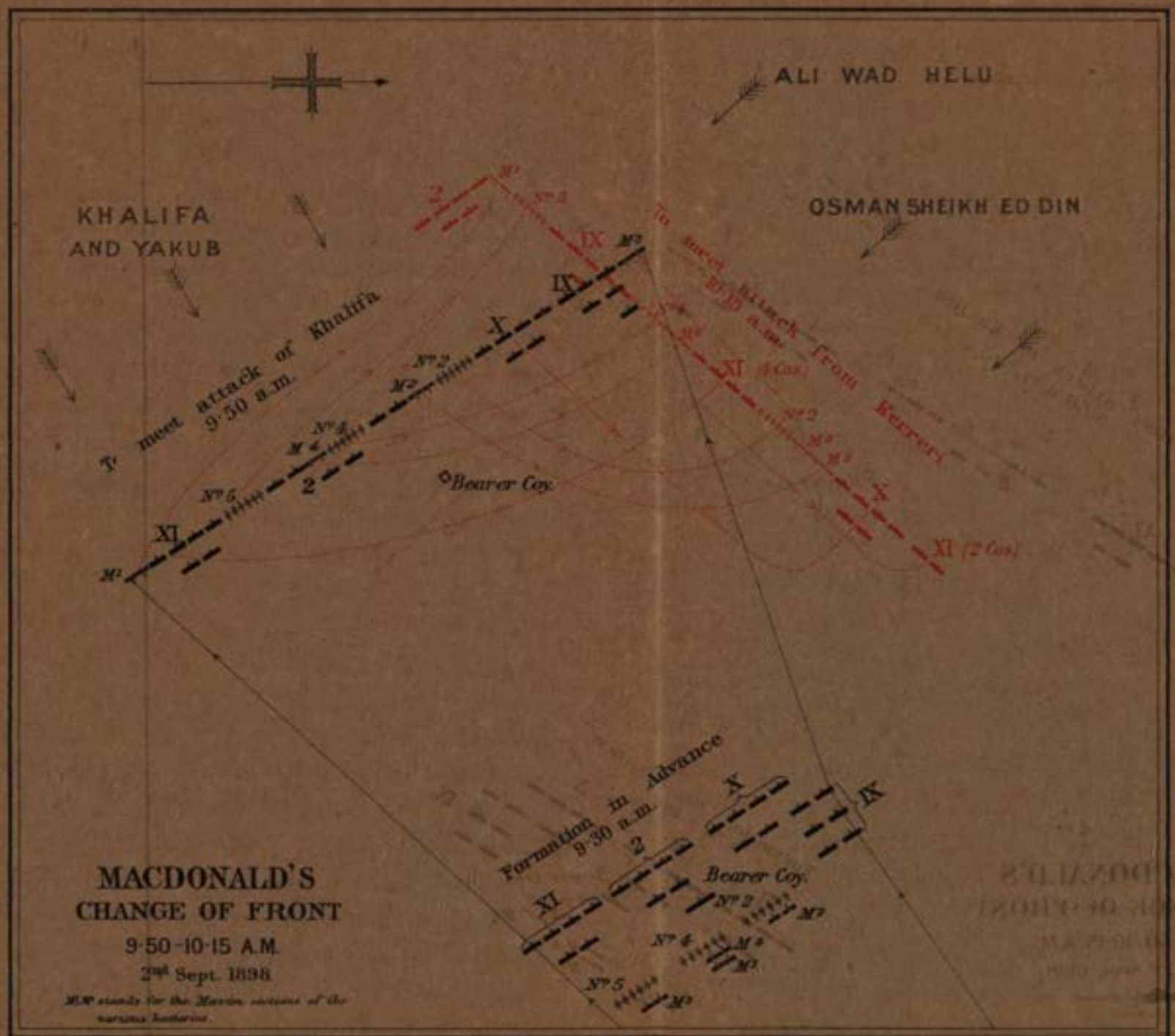
The three Soudanese battalions were now confronted with the whole fury of the Dervish attack from Kerreri. The bravery of the blacks was no less conspicuous than the wildness of their musketry. They evinced an extraordinary excitement—firing their rifles without any attempt to sight or aim, and only anxious to pull the trigger, re-load, and pull it again. In vain the British officers strove to calm their impulsive soldiers. In vain they called upon them by name, or, taking their rifles from them, adjusted the sights themselves. The independent firing was utterly beyond control. Soon the ammunition began to be exhausted, and the soldiers turned round clamouring for more cartridges, which their officers doled out to them by twos and threes in the hopes of steadying them. It was useless. They fired them all off and clamoured for more. Meanwhile, although suffering fearfully from the close and accurate fire of the three artillery batteries and eight Maxim guns, and to a less extent from the random firing of the Soudanese, the Dervishes drew nearer in thousands, and it seemed certain that there would be an actual collision. The valiant blacks prepared themselves with delight to meet the shock, notwithstanding the overwhelming numbers of the enemy. Scarcely three rounds per man remained throughout the brigade. The batteries opened a rapid fire of case-shot. Still the

THE LINCOLNSHIRE REGIMENT

Dervishes advanced, and the survivors of their first wave of assault were scarcely a hundred yards away. Behind them both Green flags pressed forward over enormous masses of armed humanity, rolling on as they now believed to victory.

At this moment the Lincoln Regiment began to come up. As they doubled along the rear of the Xth Soudanese, the blacks looked round. In the days when British regiments were known by numbers, each of which had a glorious significance, the Lincolnshire was called the 10th Foot. Officers and men still cherish the famous number, although they are labelled with a shoddy, modern territorial title; and throughout the war they called the Xth Soudanese 'our black battalion'—to the intense delight of those military savages. The Soudanese had for the most part ceased firing, having come to the end of their ammunition, and were waiting with fixed bayonets for the hand-to-hand conflict which now seemed inevitable. Suddenly they saw the English regiment—their own English regiment—coming to their help. All along the line they turned a succession of grinning faces, and emitted wild cries of satisfaction and of welcome. But the English were intent on business. As soon as the leading company—Captain Maxwell's[12]—cleared the right of MacDonald's brigade, they formed line, and opened an independent fire obliquely across the front of the Soudanese. Groups of Dervishes in twos and threes were then within a hundred yards. The great masses were within 300 yards. The independent firing lasted two

[12] Captain R. P. Maxwell, Lincolnshire Regiment.



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minutes, during which the whole regiment deployed. Its effect was to clear away the leading groups of Arabs. The deployment having been accomplished with the loss of a dozen men, including Colonel Sloggett, who fell shot through the breast while attending to the wounded, section volleys were ordered. With excellent discipline the independent firing was instantly stopped, and the battalion began with machine-like regularity to carry out the principles of modern musketry, for which their training had efficiently prepared them and their rifles were admirably suited. They fired on an average sixty rounds per man, and finally repulsed the attack.

The Dervishes were weak in cavalry, and had scarcely 2,000 horsemen on the field. About 400 of these, mostly the personal retainers of the various Emirs, were formed into an irregular regiment and attached to the flag of Ali-Wad-Helu. Now when these horsemen perceived that there was no more hope of victory, they arranged themselves in a solid mass and charged the left of MacDonald's brigade. The distance was about 500 yards, and, wild as was the firing of the Soudanese, it was evident that they could not possibly succeed. Nevertheless, many carrying no weapon in their hands, and all urging their horses to their utmost speed, they rode unflinchingly to certain death. All were killed and fell as they entered the zone of fire—three, twenty, fifty, two hundred, sixty, thirty, five and one out beyond them all—a brown smear across the sandy plain. A few riderless horses alone broke through the ranks of the infantry.

The valour of their deed has been discounted by those who have told the tale. 'Mad fanaticism' is the depreciating comment of their conquerors. I hold this to be a cruel injustice. Nor can he be a very brave man who will not credit them with a nobler motive, and believe that they died to clear their honour from the stain of defeat. Why should we regard as madness in the savage what would be sublime in civilised men? For I hope that if evil days should come upon our own country, and the last army which a collapsing Empire could interpose between London and the invader were dissolving in rout and ruin, that there would be some—even in these modern days—who would not care to accustom themselves to a new order of things and tamely survive the disaster.

After the failure of the attack from Kerreri the whole Anglo-Egyptian army advanced westward, in a line of bayonets and artillery nearly two miles long, and drove the Dervishes before them into the deserts, so that they could by no means rally or re-form. The Egyptian cavalry, who had returned along the river, formed line on the right of the infantry in readiness to pursue. At half-past eleven Sir H. Kitchener shut up his glasses, and, remarking that he thought the enemy had been given 'a good dusting,' gave the order for the brigades to resume their interrupted march on Omdurman—a movement which was possible, now that the forces in the plain were beaten. The Brigadiers thereupon stopped the firing, massed their commands in convenient formations, and turned again towards the south and the city. The Lincolnshire Regiment remained detached as a rearguard.

CHARGE OF THE BAGGARA HORSE

Meanwhile the great Dervish army, which had advanced at sunrise in hope and courage, fled in utter rout, pursued by the Egyptian cavalry, harried by the 21st Lancers, and leaving more than 9,000 warriors dead and even greater numbers wounded behind them.

Thus ended the battle of Omdurman—the most signal triumph ever gained by the arms of science over barbarians. Within the space of five hours the strongest and best-armed savage army yet arrayed against a modern European Power had been destroyed and dispersed, with hardly any difficulty, comparatively small risk, and insignificant loss to the victors.

CHAPTER XX

THE FALL OF THE CITY

Some results of the charge—The flight of the Dervishes—A prisoner—The advance of the army—Khor Shambat—The Grenadiers—The Egyptian cavalry—The march on Omdurman—The surrender of the city—Within the great wall—At the Mahdi's Tomb—Mr. Hubert Howard—An adventurous life—The wealth of the Empire—The escape of the Khalifa—Arab loyalty—The pursuit by the Egyptian cavalry—The pursuit by the 'friendlies'—A young Baggara—Neufeld—Repose—Some military questions—The merit of the victory—Doubtful points—The premature left wheel—The failure to pursue—Treatment of the wounded Dervishes—The 'glory of Omdurman'—The casualties—Ammunition expenditure—Dervish losses.

Now when the Khalifa Abdullahi saw that the last army that remained to him was broken, that all his attacks had failed, and that thousands of his bravest warriors were slain, he rode from the field of battle in haste, and, regaining the city, proceeded like a brave and stubborn soldier to make preparations for its defence, and like a prudent man arrangements for his own flight should further resistance be impossible. He ordered his great war-drum to be beaten and the *ombya* to be blown, and for the last time those dismal notes boomed through the streets of Omdurman. They were not heeded. The Arab army had had enough fighting. They recognised that all was lost. Besides, to return to the city was difficult and dangerous.

The charge of the 21st Lancers had been costly, but

it was not ineffective. The consequent retirement of the Dervish brigade protecting the extreme right exposed their line of retreat. The cavalry were resolved to take full advantage of the position they had paid so much to gain, and while the second attack was at its height we were already trotting over the plain towards the long lines of fugitives who streamed across it.* With the experience of the past hour in our minds, and with the great numbers of the enemy in our front, it seemed to many that a bloody day lay before us. But we had not gone far when individual Dervishes began to walk towards the advancing squadrons, throwing down their weapons, holding up their hands, and imploring mercy.

As soon as it was apparent that the surrender of individuals was accepted, the Dervishes began to come in and lay down their arms—at first by twos and threes, then by dozens, and finally by scores. Meanwhile those who were still intent on flight made a wide *détour* to avoid the cavalry, and streamed past our front at a mile's distance in uninterrupted succession. 'It looked,' to quote an officer's description, 'just like the people hurrying into Newmarket town after the Cambridgeshire.' The disarming and escorting of the prisoners delayed our advance, and many thousands of Dervishes escaped from the field. But the position of the cavalry and the pressure they exerted shouldered the routed army out into the desert, so that retiring they missed the city of Omdurman altogether, and, disregarding the Khalifa's summons to defend it and the orders of their Emirs, continued their flight to the south. To harry

* Map, 'Omdurman: Noon, September 2, 1898,' to face page 172.

and annoy the fugitives a few troops were dismounted with carbines, and a constant fire was made on such as did not attempt to come in and surrender. Yet the crowds continued to run the gauntlet, and I myself saw at least 20,000 men make good their escape. Many of these were still vicious, and replied to our fire with bullets, fortunately at very long range. It would have been madness for three hundred Lancers to gallop in amongst such masses, and we had to be content with the results of the carbine fire. The need of a fresh cavalry brigade on this flank was apparent. Of course an additional cavalry force would have involved more transport and more expense, and it cannot be denied that a sufficient result was obtained without it. Yet I could not help thinking of my Frontier friends, and of the effect which three smart regiments of Bengal Lancers would have produced. I write only from the tactical point of view. From any other it was evident that there had been enough killing that day. Even the carbine fire seemed a stern reckoning, for it was apparent that the enemy were hopelessly routed. My troop was among those detached on this duty, and we blazed away merrily for some time—without, I am glad to say, doing much harm—at stray groups of Dervishes who tried to make short cuts across our front into Omdurman. We took one of the wounded Arabs prisoner. The rest were carried off by their friends. As the troop approached this man he threw down his weapons in token of surrender. His left foot had been shattered by a bullet which had struck him in the heel. He, however, grinned civilly as soon as he realised he was

not to be immediately put to death. The troopers picked up his spears and smashed his rifle, and he was then invited, in something of the spirit of Grant's proclamation to the Confederates, to depart and plough his native sands. As he did not understand English, he may be excused for not undertaking that profitless task. He rose painfully from the ground and began to limp off towards the city, his injured foot sponging the ground with blood as he progressed, and I thought I had seen the last of him; but he was destined to relieve us of a painful dilemma before the day was out.

While all this had been going on, the advance of the army on Omdurman was continuing. Nor was it long before we saw the imposing array of infantry topping the sandhills near Surgham and flooding out into the plain which lay between them and the city. High over the centre brigade flew the Black Flag of the Khalifa, and underneath a smaller flash of red marked the position of the Headquarters Staff. The black masses of men continued to move slowly across the open ground while we fired at the flying Arabs, and at twelve o'clock we saw them halt near the river about three miles from the city. Orders now reached us to join them, and as the sun was hot, the day dragged, all were tired and hungry, and the horses needed water, we were not long in complying, and the remnants of the Dervish army made good their retreat unmolested.

We marched back to the Nile. The whole force had halted to drink, to eat, and to rest at Khor Shambat. The scene was striking. Imagine a six hundred

yards stretch of the Suez Canal. Both banks are crowded with brown- or chocolate-clad figures. The northern side is completely covered with the swarming infantry of the British Division. Thousands of animals —the horses of the cavalry, the artillery mules, the transport camels—fill the spaces and the foreground. Multitudes of *khaki*-clad men are sitting in rows on the slopes. Hundreds are standing by the brim or actually in the red muddy water. All are drinking deeply. Two or three carcasses, lying in the shallows, show that the soldiers are thirsty rather than particular. On all sides water-bottles are being filled from the welcome Nile, which has come into the desert to refresh the weary animals and men.

After the horses had been watered, and while the men were at the tins of bully-beef they had carried laboriously throughout the day, I mingled with the crowd, and was so fortunate as to discover the mess camels of the 21st Lancers. The good news brought the other officers of the regiment to the spot, and it was not long before we were provided with a sufficient meal. The reader may perhaps object that I set great store by such an uninteresting feature of the account as the occasions of eating. My action is designed; for he must learn, an he knows it not already, that nothing in war is so important. The wise man on the field of honour will be distinguished by his appetite, which at once proclaims his care for the future, his disdain for the past, and his composure in the present.

The Grenadier Guards were near the scene of our unexpected picnic. They were equally fortunate, and

had even—such was their enterprise—erected some sort of shelter from the sun. They were disgusted that the result of the day had been so easily obtained, and were in apparent dudgeon that they had not been severely engaged. We offered consolation in the suggestion that there would be street-fighting in Omdurman. Indeed, it looked as if the infantry had still plenty of work before them. But they scouted the idea. The Soudanese brigades were to enter the town first. Her Majesty's Guards were not to have the honour of losing their lives among the mud hovels of barbaric slums. It was certainly monstrous! All inquired about the charge; nor were their remarks less complimentary than their curiosity. I tried to obtain some reliable estimate of the casualties, but no one had any definite statement to make. We learned with pain that Major Mahon of the Egyptian cavalry was killed, and I was myself informed that I had been seriously wounded. Such are the strange rumours that spread through an army! The latter was easily disproved, and when the Egyptian cavalry returned from their pursuit to water at the *khor* the first report was happily found also incorrect.

From Colonel Broadwood's officers we learned some account of their share in the last phase of the battle. During the attack on MacDonald's brigade the Egyptian cavalry had watched from their position on the southern slopes of the Kerreri hills, ready to intervene, if necessary, and support the infantry by a charge. As soon as the Dervish onsets had ended and the whole mass had begun to retreat, Broadwood's

cavalry brigade formed in two lines of four and of five squadrons respectively, and advanced in pursuit —first west for two miles, and then south-west for three miles more towards the Round-topped Hill. Like the 21st Lancers, they were delayed by many Dervishes who threw down their arms and surrendered, and whom it was necessary to escort to the river. But as they drew nearer the mass of the routed army, it became apparent that the spirit of the enemy was by no means broken. Stubborn men fired continually as they lay wounded, refusing to ask for quarter—doubting, perhaps, that it would be granted. Under every bush that gave protection from the lances of the horsemen little groups collected to make a desperate stand. Solitary spearmen awaited unflinching the charge of a whole squadron. Men who had feigned death sprang up to fire an unexpected shot. The cavalry began to suffer occasional casualties. In proportion as they advanced the resistance of the enemy increased. The direct pursuit had soon to be abandoned, but in the hope of intercepting some part of the retreating mob Major Le Gallais, who commanded the three leading squadrons, changed direction towards the river, and, galloping nearly parallel to Khor Shambat, charged and cut into the tail of the enemy's disordered array. The Arabs, however, stood their ground, and firing their rifles wildly in all directions killed and wounded a good many horses and men, so that the squadrons were content to bring up their right still more, and finally to ride out of the hornet swarm, into which they had plunged, towards Surgham Hill. The

pursuit was then suspended, and the Egyptian cavalry joined the rest of the army by the Nile.

It was not until four o'clock that the cavalry received orders to ride round the outside of the city and harry such as should seek to escape. The Egyptian squadrons and the 21st Lancers started forthwith, and, keeping about a mile from the houses of the suburbs, proceeded to make the circle of the town. The infantry had already entered it, as was evident from a continual patter of shots and an occasional rattle of the Maxim guns. The leading Soudanese brigade—Maxwell's—had moved from Khor Shambat at 2.30, formed in line of company columns and in the following order:—

Direction of Advance

XIVth Soudanese	XIIth Soudanese	↑	Maxims	8th Egyptians	32nd Field Battery	XIIIth Soudanese

The Sirdar, attended by his whole Staff, with the Black Flag of the Khalifa carried behind him and accompanied by the band of the XIth Soudanese, rode in front of the XIVth battalion. The regiments were soon enveloped by the numberless houses of the suburbs and divided by the twisting streets; but the whole brigade pressed forward on a broad front. Behind followed the rest of the army—battalion after battalion, brigade after brigade—until all, swallowed up by the maze of mud houses, were filling the open spaces and blocking and choking the streets and alleys with solid masses of armed men, who marched or pushed their way up to the great wall.

The Sirdar had not penetrated the suburbs more

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than half a mile when three Dervishes, their *jibbas* turned inside out and bearing a white flag, ran forward to meet him, and threw themselves at his feet, imploring him to accept the surrender of the city and to spare the lives of its inhabitants. The conqueror required the principal Emir, and after a short delay an old man approached on a donkey. He abased himself to the ground, and then rising offered the keys of the gates. These were accepted, and the Sirdar informed him, in Arabic, that he would spare all who should lay down their arms. The old man kissed the General's hand, and ran back towards the great wall, shouting the good news. Immediately there arose a loud cry of relief from the hidden thousands who awaited the answer. The suburbs, which till now had seemed occupied only by the advancing infantry, sprang to life. From every house men, women, and children appeared in dozens and scores. Many of the inhabitants rushed towards the Staff, kissing the boots of the officers, shaking their hands, and calling down blessings on their heads. Slatin was nearly pulled from his horse by the numbers of old friends and recent enemies who fawned on him. The Sirdar himself received a royal welcome from the city he had taken; nor can he be blamed because in his despatch he chose to regard this natural manifestation of joy on the part of the townsfolk at hearing they were not to be put to the sword as their satisfaction at their deliverance from the rule of the Khalifa. The first is, however, the true explanation. The cries of the populace were loud, but the heaps of dead on the plain

bore more convincing testimony to the real wishes of the people.

For two miles the progress through the suburbs continued, and the General hurrying on with his Staff soon found himself with the band, the Maxims, and the artillery at the foot of the great wall. Several hundred Dervishes had gathered for its defence; but the fact that no *banquette* had been made on which they could stand to fire prevented their resistance from being effective. A few ill-aimed shots were however fired, to which the Maxim guns replied with vigour. In a quarter of an hour the wall was cleared. The Sirdar then posted two guns of the 32nd Field Battery at its northern angle, and then, accompanied by the remaining four guns and the XIVth Soudanese, turned eastwards and rode along the foot of the wall towards the river, seeking some means of entry into the inner city. The breach made by the gunboats was found temporarily blocked by wooden doors, but the main gate was open, and through this the General passed into the heart of Omdurman. Within the wall the scenes were more terrible than in the suburbs. The effects of the bombardment were displayed on every side. Women and children lay frightfully mangled in the roadway. At one place a whole family had been crushed by a projectile. Dead Dervishes, already in the fierce heat beginning to decompose, dotted the ground. The houses were crammed with wounded. Hundreds of decaying carcasses of animals filled the air with a sickening smell. Here, as without the wall, the anxious inhabitants renewed their protestations of

loyalty and welcome; and interpreters, riding down the narrow alleys, proclaimed the merciful conditions of the conquerors and called on the people to lay down their arms. Great piles of surrendered weapons rose in the streets, guarded by Soudanese soldiers. Many Arabs sought clemency; but there were others who disdained it; and the whirring of the Maxims, the crashes of the volleys, and a continual dropping fire attested that there was fighting in all parts of the city into which the columns had penetrated. All Dervishes who did not immediately obey were shot or bayoneted, and bullets whistled at random along or across the streets. But while women crowded round his horse, while sullen men fired carefully from houses, while beaten warriors cast their spears on the ground and others still resisting were despatched in corners, the Sirdar rode steadily onward through the confusion, the stench, and the danger, until he reached the Mahdi's Tomb.

Here a shocking accident occurred. The open space in front of the mausoleum was filled with troops, when suddenly a shell screamed overhead and burst close to the General and his Staff. All looked up in blank amazement, and when two more shells followed in quick succession everyone hurried from the square in excitement and alarm. But Mr. Hubert Howard, who had dismounted and was standing in an adjacent doorway, was killed by a fourth shell before he could follow. The two guns which had been left outside the town had suddenly opened fire on their attractive target. Apparently their orders, which directed them to shell

the tomb under certain circumstances, justify their action; nor does it seem that any blame attaches to the officer in command, who had received his instructions personally from Sir H. Kitchener.

After the artillery firing had been stopped the Sirdar continued his examination of the town and his search for the Khalifa. At the mosque two fanatics charged the Soudanese escort, and each killed or badly wounded a soldier before he was shot. The day was now far spent, and it was dusk when the prison was reached. The General was the first to enter that foul and gloomy den. Charles Neufeld and some thirty heavily shackled prisoners were released. Neufeld, who was placed on a pony, seemed nearly mad with delight, and talked and gesticulated with queer animation. 'Thirteen years,' he said to his rescuer, 'have I waited for this day.' From the prison, as it was now dark, the Sirdar rode to the great square in front of the mosque, in which his Headquarters were established, and where both British brigades were already bivouacking. The rest of the army settled down along the roadways through the suburbs, and only Maxwell's brigade remained in the city to complete the establishment of law and order—a business which was fortunately hidden by the shades of night.

Thus the occupation of Omdurman was accomplished, and only the sad and terrible accident which caused the death of Mr. Hubert Howard marred the good fortune of the capture.

Of this event, as of the Sirdar's entry, I saw nothing, for the cavalry hung upon the flanks of the city until

night was far advanced; nor was it until ten o'clock that I heard the news. At first it seemed incredible. But there are no limits to the devilish ingenuity of malicious fortune, and the truth became certain that the man who had passed through many dangers, and who had that morning escaped unhurt from a charge where the casualties reached nearly twenty per cent., had been killed by a British shell. Amid all the perils of war he was the victim of an accident.

Mr. Hubert Howard was a man of some reputation and of much greater promise. The love of adventure had already led him several times to scenes of war and tumult. In 1895 he passed the Spanish lines in Cuba, and for six weeks fought and was hunted with the Cuban insurgents, whose privations and dangers he shared, and whose cause he afterwards pleaded warmly. At this time I was with the Spanish forces, witnessing their operations, and the fact that we had been on opposite sides proved a bond of union. Thereafter I saw him frequently. His profession—that of the law—gave him more opportunities for travelling than fall to the lot of a subaltern of horse. On the outbreak of the Matabele war he hurried to South Africa, and in the attack on Sekombo's kraal in the autumn of 1896 he acted as adjutant of Robertson's Cape Boys, and displayed military qualities which left no doubt, in the minds of those who saw, that he should have been a soldier, not only for his own sake, but for that of the army. Having on his own initiative captured a steep and nearly precipitous hill, which proved of considerable tactical value, he was severely wounded in the ankle.

He refused to leave the field, and continued till the end of the day to drag himself about, directing and inspiriting his men. His services on this occasion, not less than his known abilities, obtained for him the position of secretary to Lord Grey. The recrudescence of trouble in Mashonaland and Matabeleland in 1897 led him again to the field, and in many minor engagements —those unheeded skirmishes by which unrewarded men build up the Empire—he added to his reputation as a soldier and as a man.

On his return to England he passed without difficulty the needful examinations for admission to the Bar, and had been duly called; but war was in his blood. The considerable military expedition preparing on the Nile fascinated his imagination. His literary powers were known. He proceeded to Egypt in August as joint correspondent of the TIMES newspaper with Colonel Rhodes.

I need not write of how pleasant it was to ride with him on our long marches from the Atbara river, of the arguments and discussions which arose, of the plans for the future which were formed. Many times a week does ardent and energetic youth, strong with the strength of undefeated ambitions and unassailed ideals, conquer the world in anticipation. Whoever is familiar with the good-fellowship of a camp knows that the best of friends are made in the open air and when peril of life exists or impends.

A close and warm acquaintance was formed between him and the officers of the 21st Lancers. With their squadrons he witnessed the Reconnaissance of Kerreri

on the 1st of September. With all of us he rode out the charge on the morning of the 2nd. One of the first to force his way through the enemy's line, he was the first to ride up and offer his congratulations to the Colonel. But the firing behind the ridge attracted him, and, as he aspired to share all the dangers, he rode off in search of new adventures.

I would pay some tribute to his memory if words were of any avail. He was so brave a man that pity seems almost an insult, and the feeling remains that he will not have minded, whatever may lie beyond this world. It is of the type that I write. He was a representative of those young men who, with famous names and belonging to the only true aristocracy the world can now show, carry their brains and enthusiasm to the farthest corners of our wide Empire, and infuse into the whole the energy and vigour of progress. That force which in the national life of France and Germany is directed solely to military, and in the United States solely to commercial enterprises, animates in our fortunate State all parts of the public service. Seeking for roads by which to advance the commonweal, men like Howard spread to our farthest provinces. Their graves, too, are scattered. His lies in the desert near the city of Omdurman. Thither his brother correspondents carried his body on the morning after the action, and General Hunter, passing at the moment, halted a Soudanese brigade to pay full military honours.

When the news reached England, the great newspaper in whose service he perished, not less worthily

than any soldier of the Queen's armies, found some lines in 'Childe Harold' which, since they were written of his ancestor who was killed in the charge of the 10th Hussars at Waterloo, are so appropriate that I must transcribe them :—

> . . . . And when showered
> The death-bolts deadliest the thinnèd files along,
> Even where the thickest of war's tempest lowered,
> They reached no nobler breast than thine, young, gallant Howard.

While the Sirdar with the infantry of the army was taking possession of Omdurman, the British and Egyptian cavalry had moved round to the west of the city. There for nearly two hours we waited, listening to the dropping fusillade which could be heard within the great wall and wondering what was happening. Large numbers of Dervishes and Arabs, who, laying aside their *jibbas*, had ceased to be Dervishes, appeared among the houses at the edge of the suburbs. Several hundreds of these, with two or three Emirs, came out to make their submission; and we were presently so loaded with spears and swords that it was impossible to carry them, and many interesting trophies had to be destroyed. It was just getting dark when suddenly Colonel Slatin galloped up. The Khalifa had fled! The Egyptian cavalry were at once to pursue him. The 21st Lancers must await further orders. Slatin appeared very much in earnest. Nor, knowing the whole story, did I marvel. He talked with animated manner to Colonel Broadwood, questioned two of the surrendered Emirs closely, and hurried off into the dusk, while the Egyptian squadrons mounting also rode

away at a trot. Looking at their weary horses, I was quite prepared to back the Khalifa. As events proved, my confidence was well founded.

It was not for some hours after he had left the field of battle that Abdullahi realised that his army had not obeyed his summons, were continuing their retreat, and that only a few hundred Dervishes remained for the defence of the city. He seems, if we may judge from the accounts of his personal servant, an Abyssinian boy, to have faced the disasters that had overtaken him with singular composure. He rested until two o'clock, when he ate some food. Thereafter he repaired to the Tomb, and in that ruined shrine, amid the wreckage of the shell-fire, the defeated sovereign appealed to the spirit of Mohammed Ahmed to help him in his sore distress. It was the last prayer ever offered over the Mahdi's grave. The celestial counsels seem to have been in accord with the dictates of common-sense, and at four o'clock the Khalifa, hearing that the Sirdar was already entering the city, and that the English cavalry were on the parade ground to the west, mounted a small donkey, and accompanied by his principal wife, a Greek nun as a hostage, and a few attendants, rode leisurely off towards the south. Eight miles from Omdurman a score of swift camels awaited him, and on these he soon reached the main body of his routed army. Here he found many disheartened friends; but the fact that, in this evil plight, he found any friends at all must be recorded in his favour and in that of his subjects. When he arrived he had no escort—was, indeed, unarmed. The fugitives had good reason to be savage.

Their leaders had led them only to their ruin. To cut the throat of this one man who was the cause of all their sufferings was as easy as they would have thought it innocent. Yet none assailed him. The tyrant, the oppressor, the scourge of the Soudan, the hypocrite, the abominated Khalifa; the embodiment, as he has been depicted to European eyes, of all the vices; the object, as he was believed in England, of his people's bitter hatred, found safety and welcome among his flying soldiers. The surviving Emirs hurried to his side. Many had gone down on the fatal plain. Osman Azrak, the valiant Bishara, Yakub, and scores whose strange names have not obscured these pages, but who were, nevertheless, great men of war, lay staring up at the stars. Yet those that remained never wavered in their allegiance. Ali-Wad-Helu, whose leg had been shattered by a shell splinter, was senseless with pain: but the Sheikh-ed-Din, the astute Osman Digna, Ibrahim Khalil, who withstood the charge of the 21st Lancers, and others of less note rallied to the side of the appointed successor of Mohammed Ahmed, and did not, even in this extremity, abandon his cause. And so all hurried on through the gathering darkness, a confused and miserable multitude—dejected warriors still preserving their trashy rifles, and wounded men hobbling pitifully along; camels and donkeys laden with household goods; women crying, panting, dragging little children; all in thousands—nearly 30,000 altogether; with little food and less water to sustain them; the deserts before them, the gunboats on the Nile, and behind the rumours of pursuit and

a broad trail of dead and dying to mark the path of flight.

Meanwhile the Egyptian cavalry had already started on their fruitless errand. The squadrons were greatly reduced in numbers. The men carried food until the morning, the horses barley enough to last till noon. To supplement this slender provision a steamer had been ordered up the river to meet them the next day with fresh supplies. The road by the Nile was choked with armed Dervishes, and to avoid these dangerous fugitives the column struck inland and marched southward towards some hills whose dark outline showed against the sky. The unknown ground was difficult and swampy. At times the horses floundered to their girths in wet sand; at others rocky *khors* obstructed the march; horses and camels blundered and fell. The darkness complicated the confusion. At about ten o'clock Colonel Broadwood decided to go no further till there was more light. He therefore drew off the column towards the desert, and halted on a comparatively dry spot. Some muddy pools, which were luckily discovered, enabled the bottles to be filled and the horses to be watered. Then, having posted many sentries, the exhausted pursuers slept, waking from time to time to listen to the intermittent firing which was still audible, both from the direction of Omdurman and from that in which the Dervish army was flying.

I desire to complete the account of the pursuit before returning to the 21st Lancers, halted outside Omdurman. At 3 A.M. on the 3rd Colonel Broadwood's

force moved on again. Men and horses seemed refreshed, and by the aid of a bright moon the ground was covered at a good pace. By seven o'clock the squadrons approached the point on the river which had been fixed for meeting the steamer. She had already arrived, and the sight of the funnel in the distance and the anticipation of a good meal cheered all, for they had scarcely had anything to eat since the night before the battle. But as the troopers drew nearer it became evident that 300 yards of shallow water and deep swamp intervened between them and the vessel. Closer approach was prevented. There was no means of landing the stores. In the hopes of finding a suitable spot further up stream the march was resumed. The steamer kept pace along the river. The boggy ground delayed the columns, but by two o'clock seven more miles had been covered. Only the flag at the masthead was now visible, and an impassable morass separated the force from the river bank. It was impossible to obtain supplies. Without food it was out of the question to go on. Indeed, great privations must, as it was, accompany the return march. The necessity was emphasised by the reports of captured fugitives, who all told the same tale. The Khalifa had pushed on swiftly, and was trying to reorganise his army. Colonel Broadwood thereupon rested his horses till the heat of the day was over, and then began the homeward march. It was not until eleven o'clock on the 4th of September that the worn-out and famished cavalry reached their camp near Omdurman. Such was the pursuit as conducted by the regular troops. Abdel-

Azim, with 750 Arabs, persisted still further in the chase. Lightly equipped, and acquainted with the country, they reached Shegeig, nearly a hundred miles south of Khartoum, on the 7th. Here they obtained definite information. The Khalifa had two days' start, plenty of food and water, and many camels. He had organised a bodyguard of 500 Jehadia, and was besides surrounded by a large force of Arabs of various tribes. With this numerous and powerful following he was travelling day and night towards El Obeid, which town was held by an unbeaten Dervish garrison of nearly 3,000 men. On hearing these things the friendly Arabs determined—not unwisely—to abandon the pursuit, and came boastfully back to Omdurman.

After the Egyptian cavalry and the Camel Corps had disappeared in the gloom on the evening of the 2nd of September the 21st Lancers and the Horse Artillery awaited further orders for three hours, at the end of which time Colonel Martin decided to make his way into the outskirts of the city in order to bivouac for the night near one of the infantry brigades. With every precaution that the experience of the day and the noises of the night (for a continual fusillade was audible in Omdurman itself) could suggest, the regiment passed through the shattered huts and emerged upon a great open space surrounded by mud houses, but lit by the camp-fires of the 2nd British Brigade. Here the horses were unsaddled and picketed for the night.

While we were all busy about this latter task, which the extreme hardness of the soil rendered difficult, I noticed among the horses' hoofs a small dark object.

Lieutenant Wormald, whose troop was next to mine, stooped and picked it up. Loosely wrapped up in a little piece of cloth, but otherwise quite naked, there lay a tiny baby only a few hours old, who forthwith began loudly to bewail the misfortunes of the State. The story was simple. The cannonade in the plain; panic in the city; the return of the defeated warriors; the flight; the wretched mother struggling to keep up, oppressed with the pains of maternity, falling by the way, and then dragged on by force—since otherwise she could not have left the baby—and hurried away into the deserts of the south. And the baby! He had already lived an adventurous life. The whole regiment had walked over him in column of troops and left him unharmed. He had been bombarded. Now he was a prisoner of war. Yet his captors were more embarrassed than he. We laid him on the ground clear of the horses, and continued the business of picketing. Meanwhile his cries passed from lamentation to fury. He was hungry. What was to be done? Perhaps, had there been milk, we might have kept him as a pet, to be brought up with especial care until, like a young tiger cub, he should become vicious and have to be put in a cage. But there was no milk, and we could scarce invite him to share our sausages. While we still debated, who should come out of the darkness but the Dervish who had been shot in the foot? Evidently he fancied himself a favourite, since he had not been killed, and meant to take advantage of his position. Here was one solution of the difficulty. We put the baby, still protesting, in the Arab's arms, and,

giving him a few ration biscuits, bade him go. Much astonished, and by no means pleased, he departed and disappeared in the night; and I have wondered since what happened to the baby—a frail being, naked where all were armed; helpless where the strongest had been killed; at the mercy of the world where all men were fierce and busy. Perhaps the wounded Dervish caught up the fugitives and the mother regained her son, who, guided by fortune, may in future years purge the Soudan of the invading Turks and rule it as a king; or perhaps (and it is the more probable), weary and in pain, the Dervish flung his burden into some deserted corner, where its wails passed unheeded and presently ceased altogether. But even then I do not think the baby will have missed very much.

After this incident was satisfactorily settled, being too tired to go to sleep at once, I prowled off in search of information. The Headquarters Camp was very silent. On a native bed, his slumbers ensured and protected by a sentry, lay the Sirdar in well-deserved repose. A few yards away Colonel Wingate was stretched on the ground, busily writing by an uncertain light the telegram announcing the victory. In the background stood a strange figure—a pale-faced man with a ragged red beard and whiskers, clad in a blue-and-white Dervish *jibba*. He spoke continuously in a weak voice and indifferent English. A native sergeant was busy about his feet with a hammer. There was an occasional clink. The clink explained matters. This was Charles Neufeld, thirteen years the Khalifa's

prisoner, having his fetters knocked off. There were two sets of leg-irons. The smaller—with links about an inch each way—he had worn, so he said, ever since he was captured in 1885. The larger—I could just lift the shackle with one hand—he had worn for a month only. Three enormous iron rings were about each ankle. They could break the coupling chains, but the rings had to remain till the morning. He talked volubly. The remark that seems most worthy of record was this: 'I have forgotten how to walk!' I thought, in spite of the fact that he looked well fed, of the Bastille prisoner in 'A Tale of Two Cities.'

The news obtainable, on the night of the battle, at Headquarters—after all, the fount of knowledge—was briefly this:—The troops had marched through Omdurman from end to end. They would occupy it in the morning. The Khalifa and the remains of his army had fled, leaving about 10,000 dead on the field. The survivors of various factions were fighting among themselves in the city, and would be 'dealt with' at daylight. Our loss was under 500 officers and men. All this seeming satisfactory, I returned to my squadron, and having supped agreeably on sausages and jam, made the fitting acknowledgments to Providence and went to bed, or rather to ground.

The time that the soldiers devoted to sleep may be profitably employed by the reader in reflection, and it is perhaps better to discuss the conduct of the action while its events are fresh in the mind than to reserve such criticism for its peculiar chapter.

It will be said, that the completeness of the victory

should prevent all and any from canvassing the conduct of the battle; that the results were good enough to justify the means; and that, when an affair has been managed well, it is idle to inquire how it could have been managed better. I do not agree. If the comparative were beyond criticism, the superlative would be beyond attainment. Perfection must remain the human ideal. Besides, the defeat of the Dervishes at Omdurman was so easily accomplished, that many are tempted to ask whether it was really a task of great difficulty. Among those who fought in the Expeditionary Force there was scarcely a doubt when once the night of the 1st of September had passed. No officer or man believed that the Arabs could by any possibility prevail. They were confident in their superiority in weapons, in discipline, and in their great numerical strength. I omit that they were confident in their commander, not because they doubted his capacity, but because no one thought about that part of the question. Hard fighting on more or less equal terms is necessary before soldiers consider the personal skill of the General-in-Chief. An army, till it has been sorely tried, believes in itself. But, on whatever they built their confidence, the foundation was sufficient. The Nile Expeditionary Force was equal to all contingencies. Whether they were handled well or badly, the destruction of the enemy seemed assured. One single brigade was actually able, though it was admittedly a terrible strain, to withstand the attack of more than half the Dervish army. The Sirdar had six brigades. When this has been said, the question of

whether this or that movement was preferable becomes one of minor importance.

Let us take the first point which has been raised by military critics. It is said that the troops should not have opened fire as early as they did, but should have allowed the attack to come within 700 or 800 yards, and then inflicted still more terrible losses at this closer range. Probably, if the battle had been fought over again the next day, this would have been done: but I do not think any General could be expected to tempt fortune under the actual circumstances. The ordinary risks of war are quite sufficient.

The second observation raises a larger question: Should the Sirdar have tried to enter Omdurman immediately after the repulse of the first attack, instead of settling with the enemy in the field? There can be no dispute that the échelon movement was premature. The event proved that it was impossible. The town could not be taken until the Dervishes were routed. The Sirdar desired, speaking in general terms, to wheel his army to the left and march southwards into the city. He was compelled to wheel it to the right and roll the enemy back northward towards Kerreri. At the critical moment—if critical moment there was—he handled his great force with surprising ease. The reader who will look at the diagram of Macdonald's change of front[1] may realise what a complicated affair is the sudden movement of six such ponderous brigades. It was successfully carried out because the rearmost brigade held its own. Had

[1] See Plan to face page 160.

that brigade been broken, there would indeed have been a fearful peril. That it was not broken is due, first of all, to the tremendous power of modern weapons; secondly, to the great military qualities of MacDonald; and thirdly, to the foresight of General Hunter, who deliberately and of his own initiative, transposed the rear brigades, so as to put MacDonald and the best Soudanese regiments at the rear of the échelon and in the most exposed position, and who attached to MacDonald's command three batteries of artillery and eight Maxim guns. The destructive musketry of either British brigade would, of course, have held its own front. But there are many who think that no brigade in the Egyptian army, no brigade in any army not equipped with magazine rifles, could have repulsed the attack of Ali-Wad-Helu and the Sheikh-ed-Din without the powerful assistance of artillery and, even more, of machine guns.

It may therefore be contended that the Sirdar by his premature movement towards Omdurman created a difficult situation—from which, not he, but his subordinates extricated the army. But let me pursue this matter to the end. The first object in the brain of the commander was to enter Omdurman. To seize the city was the paramount consideration. His subordinates were in agreement with him that the trial should be made. It might be dangerous, but it must be attempted. The Sirdar, then, gave the order. Hunter took measures accordingly. As Kitchener relied on Hunter, so Hunter trusted in MacDonald: neither was deceived. This is the only way in which an

army can be commanded in the field. The Chief looks to his objects; the principal subordinates arrange the details by which they may be carried out. The conclusion to which this argument points is that the Sirdar picked good men and trusted them implicitly. Their credit is also his, and his triumph is only discounted by the great inequality of the combatants in weapons.

The third important question is raised by the general disposition of the mounted forces. There can be little doubt that the presence of the Egyptian cavalry and Camel Corps on the Kerreri ridge, by misleading the left of the Dervish army and attracting it northwards, contributed materially to the result of the battle. Through their pursuit of the cavalry the Dervishes, before they attacked MacDonald's brigade, had been on the move since daybreak, had expended much of their ammunition, and had perhaps lost some confidence in the leaders who had led them against so intangible a foe. Moreover, the forces of Osman Sheikh-ed-Din in their attack northwards became scattered, and the blows dealt by them afterwards were delivered—and consequently defeated—in detail. The prisoners, many of whom were intelligent men of much experience in war, expressed the opinion that the cause of their defeat was due to this useless fight with the cavalry at Kerreri. I have already written that their chances had departed with the darkness of the preceding night, but the fact that the Dervishes regarded the cavalry as so powerful a factor in their ruin has a certain significance.

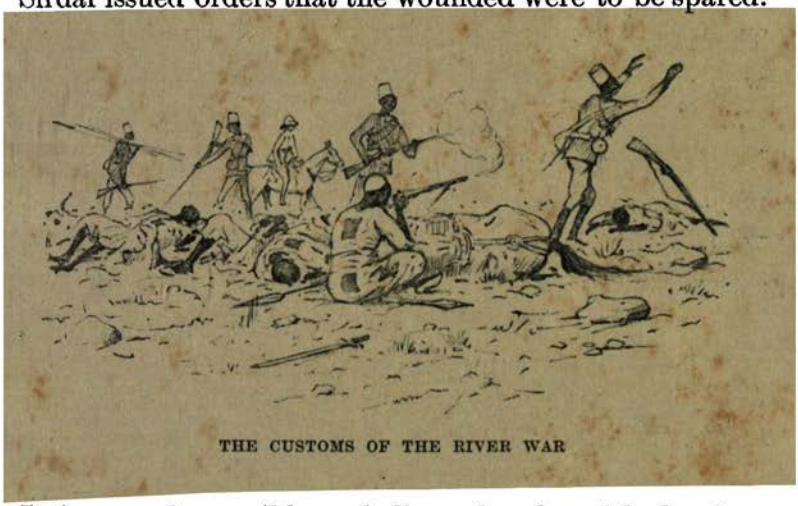
The charge of the 21st Lancers and its effect on the fortunes of the day have also been described; but, when all justice has been done to the employment of the mounted arm, the objection may still be urged that the fruits of victory were not gathered. It is true that many prisoners were taken. Indeed, the best energies of the horses and men were wasted in capturing these wretched subordinates. The paramount object for the cavalry was the capture of the Khalifa. Examined from any standpoint, but especially from this, the whole pursuit must be called a hopeless failure. On whom does the responsibility lie? Not on the troopers, who rode and fought till both they and their horses were exhausted; not on the cavalry leaders, who handled their divided commands with a skill and courage of which the reader may be himself a judge; but upon the Sirdar, and on him alone. First of all the mounted forces were too few. The proportion which cavalry in an army should bear to the strength of the other arms has always been a fairly constant quantity. Napoleon rated it as high as one to four. The modern preference is for a little less. 'If,' says Colonel Henderson[2] in a recent work, 'the cavalry is allowed to fall below the usual proportion of one trooper to every six men of the other arms, the army suffers.' The reason is apparent. Infantry and artillery may win battles, but the mounted arm alone can profit by their success. The proportion of cavalry to the other arms in the Anglo-Egyptian force fell far below the recognised standard. If the cavalry were too

[2] Professor of Tactics at the Staff College.

few compared with the army to which they belonged, they were hopelessly outnumbered by the great Dervish host. A handful of perhaps 1,200 horsemen were expected to pursue effectively a multitude of exasperated savages, who could not have numbered less than 20,000—and probably reached a far larger total.

But few as were the British and Egyptian cavalry, a better result might have been achieved had they been more advisedly disposed. The utter lack of all combination between the 21st Lancers and Colonel Broadwood's brigade, and the great interval by which these units were divided, prevented the whole cavalry force advancing together as soon as the enemy were in full retreat. The Egyptian cavalry expended their strength in an ineffective direct pursuit at the tail of the Dervish army. The 21st Lancers, having at a heavy cost gained an excellent position on the flank of the line of retreat, found themselves too few to seriously profit by the advantage they had won. The results were unsatisfactory. The retreating Arabs marched from the field almost unmolested; the Khalifa escaped to rally his followers; a force bitterly hostile to the Egyptian Government holds Kordofan and disturbs the other provinces; the prospect of a difficult expedition clouds the horizon; and the name of Omdurman must be added to that long list of battles in which the victorious army failed to take advantage of their triumph. It will no doubt be urged that an extra cavalry brigade would have caused an extra expenditure of money. I applaud the cheapness of Kitchener's campaigns. But there is no worse extravagance in war than an economy of soldiers.

Yet another matter delays the conclusion of this chapter. It cannot, however, be omitted. Too much has been said and written about the treatment of the Dervish wounded for anyone who attempts to write a comprehensive account to avoid the discussion. I shall not hesitate to pronounce, though the question is one about which everybody is a partisan. The reader may recall that before the attack on Mahmud's *zeriba* the Sirdar issued orders that the wounded were to be spared.



THE CUSTOMS OF THE RIVER WAR

It is scarcely possible to believe that he wished otherwise at Omdurman. It is nevertheless a pity that his former order was not republished to the troops; for I must personally record that there was a very general impression that the fewer the prisoners, the greater would be the satisfaction of the commander. The sentiment that the British soldier is incapable of brutality, is one which never fails to win the meed of popular applause; but there are in fact a considerable proportion of cruel men in every army. The mistaken impression I have

alluded to encouraged this class. The unmeasured terms in which the Dervishes had been described in the newspapers, and the idea which had been laboriously circulated, of 'avenging Gordon,' had inflamed their passions, and had led them to believe that it was quite correct to regard their enemy as vermin—unfit to live. The result was that there were many wounded Dervishes killed.

I divide these wounded Dervishes into three classes. The first, and by far the largest, class consisted of those who were dangerous. There can of course be no objection to destroying as many of these as may have been necessary for the safety and the convenient movement of the troops. The second class comprised those who, being terribly wounded, were killed to put them out of their misery. Whether or not that is justifiable, is a difficult philosophical question. Those who think, as I do, that extreme, prolonged and useless pain is a greater evil than death, will not disturb themselves about the fate of this second class. About the third class there can be no dispute. A certain number—how many I cannot tell, but certainly not less than a hundred wounded Arabs—were despatched, although they threw down their arms and appealed for quarter. I have examined and listened to a great deal of evidence on this point, and it does not appear that there were more than a score of such cases in the British division and the 21st Lancers; and in every case the men were severely reproved by their officers, and prevented from repeating their brutal acts. The British troops, however, passed over ground not very thickly strewn with

wounded Dervishes, and nearly all who perished were killed by the Soudanese and Egyptian troops, and in particular by Maxwell's brigade.[3] Many atrocious acts were also perpetrated by the camp-followers; but their intervention was a feature which no General could have foreseen before the battle, and all were busy while it lasted. Such are what I believe to be the actual facts, and I also record in contradistinction, that thousands of wounded Dervishes survived the day, that many were succoured by the soldiers, and that upwards of 5,000 prisoners were taken. It would be therefore unjust to make any charge of barbarity against the army, and still more so against the leader, upon whom the only legitimate criticism is that he did not republish his former merciful order. But, when all this has been said, the mind turns with disgust from the spectacle of unequal slaughter. The name of the battle, blazoned on the colours, preserves for future generations the memory of a successful expedition. Regiments may exult in the part they played. Military experts may draw instruction from the surprising demonstration of the power of modern weapons. But the individual soldier will carry from the field only a very transient satisfaction, and the 'glory of Omdurman' will seem to any who may five years hence read this book a very absurd expression.

In the battle and capture of Omdurman the losses of the Expeditionary Force were as set forth in pages 198, 199.

[3] I was not present after Omdurman, but, if such incidents took place, they were certainly a new feature in Soudan warfare; for I must record that, having ridden over many Soudan battlefields, I have never seen a man who had thrown down his arms refused quarter.—EDITOR.

BRITISH DIVISION

British Officers and Others ranking as Officers

Killed (3)

Capt. G. Caldecott, 1st Royal Warwickshire Regiment.
Lieut. R. G. Grenfell, 12th Royal Lancers: *attached* 21st Lancers.
Hon. H. Howard, 21st Lancers: correspondent of the TIMES.

Wounded (11)

Col. F. Rhodes, D.S.O.: correspondent of the TIMES
Lieut.-Col. Sloggett, R.A.M.C.
Capt. Hon. W. L. Bagot, 1st Grenadier Guards
Capt. S. S. S. Clarke, 1st Cameron Highlanders
Lieut. and Adj. A. M. Pirie, 21st Lancers
Lieut. J. C. Brinton, 2nd Life Guards: *attached* 21st Lancers
Lieut. C. E. Etches, 1st Royal Warwickshire Regiment
Lieut. A. D. Nicholson, 1st Cameron Highlanders
Lieut. Hon. R. F. Molyneux, Royal Horse Guards: *attached* 21st Lancers
Lieut. C. S. Nesham, 21st Lancers
Mr. C. Williams, correspondent of the DAILY CHRONICLE

Summary of Loss in the Division

	Killed		Wounded		Total number of Casualties
	Officers	Men	Officers	Men	
21st Lancers	1*	20	4†	46	71
1st Grenadier Guards	—	—	1	4	5
1st Northumberland Fusiliers	—	—	—	2	2
1st Royal Warwick Regiment	1	—	1	6	8
1st Lincolnshire Regiment	—	1	—	17	18
2nd Lancashire Fusiliers	—	—	—	6	6
1st Seaforth Highlanders	—	1	—	17	18
1st Cameron Highlanders	—	2	2	27	31
2nd Rifle Brigade	—	1	—	8	9
Detachment Army Serv. Corps	—	—	—	1	1
Detachment R. Army Med. Corps	—	—	1	2	3
Correspondents	1	—	2	—	3
Totals	3	25	11	136	175

* 'Attached.'

† Including two 'attached.'

'The curious fatality which attends 'attached' officers, and which was much remarked on the Indian Frontier, receives a singular demonstration in the case of those attached to the 21st Lancers.

EGYPTIAN ARMY

British Officers and N.C. Officer

Wounded (6)

Capt. C. H. de Rougemont, R.A.
Capt. N. M. Smyth, Intelligence Staff
Lieut. H. A. Micklem, R.E.
Lieut. H. C. B. Hopkinson, Camel Corps
Lieut. C. F. S. Vandeleur, D.S.O.
Staff-Sergt. Hooper

NATIVE RANKS

	Officers		Men	
	Killed	Wounded	Killed	Wounded
Cavalry	1	2	1	31
Artillery	—	1	2	26
Camel Corps	—	4	4	38
1st Egyptians	—	—	1	5
2nd „	—	—	—	17
3rd „	—	—	1	5
4th „	—	—	—	4
5th „	—	—	—	4
7th „	—	1	1	3
8th „	1	—	1	10
IXth Soudanese	—	—	—	40
Xth „	—	—	2	23
XIth „	—	—	—	31
XIIth „	—	—	2	5
XIIIth „	—	—	2	10
XIVth „	—	—	1	7
15th Egyptians	—	—	—	4
17th „	—	—	—	7
18th „	—	—	—	2
Transport	—	—	—	1
Totals	2	8	18	273

General total: 19 British officers and 463 men.[5]

[5] The proportion of killed to wounded in the Egyptian army is curiously low, and quite at variance with average results. It will be seen that almost half those killed in the army were in the 21st Lancers.

The following approximate statistics of the expenditure of ammunition may be of technical interest:—

British Division (Lee-Metford rifle)		172,000 rounds
Egyptian Army (Martini-Henry rifle):		
MacDonald's Brigade	160,000	
Maxwell's „	75,000	
Lewis's „	37,000	
	272,000	„
Total	444,000	„
Artillery (case and shrapnel)	3,500	shell [6]
Maxim guns, British	37,000	
„ Egyptian	30,000	
	67,000	rounds

The Dervish losses were, from computations made on the field and corrected at a later date, ascertained to be 9,700 killed, and wounded variously estimated from 10,000 to 16,000. There were, besides, 5,000 prisoners.

[6] The two British batteries together fired 800 shell. The 4th battery of the Egyptian army fired 913 shell. This is probably a record for a single battery in one day.

CHAPTER XXI

AFTER THE VICTORY

The hospital barges—Funerals—The hoisting of the flags—The memorial service—The prize of war—The Great Wall—The Khalifa's house—The Mahdi's Tomb—The chivalry of the conquerors—The Arsenal—The passing of barbarism—The field of battle—The Lancers' trap—Courage and corruption—The Dervish dead—The story of the fight—The wounded—A scene of horror—The dregs of vengeance—'Home to Omdurman.'

THE night passed without misadventure, although continual firing and occasional volleys could be heard within the city; and neither the hardness of the ground nor the threatening noises could deprive the weary men of dreamless sleep. Early next morning orders reached the 21st Lancers to move round to the south side of Omdurman, and remain there in observation during the day.

It fell to my lot to be sent to make inquiries as to the condition and wants of the officers and men who had been wounded the day before, and whom we had not seen since they rode or were carried bleeding and in pain from the scene of the charge.

After some searching I found the barges which contained the wounded. In spite of circumstances they were all in good spirits.[1] Colonel Rhodes was

[1] The arrangements for the care of the wounded will be discussed in a later chapter.

there, propped up against the railing of the barge, with a bullet through his shoulder, but brave and cheery as ever—the life and soul of the hospital, as formerly of the camp. Sentenced to death by the Boers, he had been shot by the Dervishes. Truly he has suffered many things at the hands of the low-grade races of Africa. But he has laughed and lived through all his misfortunes. Colonel Sloggett, who—I write judicially—was upon the whole the most popular officer with the Expeditionary Force, lay silent, but fully conscious, on an *angarib*. The bullet had entered his left breast above the heart, had traversed the lungs, and, passing completely through the body, found exit near his spine. It was said that he had only a few hours to live. His own knowledge of surgery confirmed the opinion of the others. He could not speak, but even in this dark hour he greeted me—a comparative stranger—with a bright smile of recognition. By what seems almost a miracle, he has since made a recovery as complete as any that would be possible from so terrible a shock. The distinguished part that he took in the action, and his ride across the dangerous ground, have been described. His services, not only in the final campaign but throughout the war, were duly recognised. His reputation as a medical officer was high. His friends are legion. The War Office, anxious to do justice to the Royal Army Medical Corps, determined to advise Her Majesty to confer the Distinguished Service Order on this gallant and accomplished doctor. Unfortunately, by a slight error they put down the wrong name on the list. Another received the coveted prize, and

Colonel Sloggett has had to content himself with the universal respect and sympathy of his comrades-in-arms.

We had heard that Lieutenant Nesham had lost his left hand, and it was with relief that I learned that it might be saved. He told me of his return to camp from the field. He was bleeding terribly. Brinton,[1] himself in like plight, had seen him; had managed, though his own arm was useless, to get a tourniquet from his pocket; and had made a soldier put it on Nesham's arm, explaining the method to the man. This had saved the subaltern's life. Otherwise, said the doctors, he would have bled to death. These are the sort of facts that brighten the picture of war with beautiful colours, till from a distance it looks almost magnificent, and the dark background and dirty brown canvas are scarcely seen.

Nothing of historic importance happened on the 3rd of September. The usual tidying-up that follows an action occupied the army and passed the hours. There were of course funerals, chiefly of soldiers who had died of their wounds. The others had been already interred. The long wail of the Dead March sounded, not for the first time, by the banks of the Nile, and a silent column of slow-pacing British soldiers accompanied a yet more silent row of bodies to their last resting-place. On an eminence which overlooks the hazy desert, the green trees of Khartoum, and the mud houses of Omdurman, and before which the majestic river sweeps with the cool sound of waters, a

[1] Lieutenant J. C. Brinton, 2nd Life Guards.

new churchyard appeared. The piles of reddish stones, and the protecting crosses which the living raised as a last tribute to those who had paid the bill for all the fun and glory of the game, will not, I think, be their only or their most enduring monument. The destruction of a state of society which had long become an anachronism—an insult as well as a danger to civilisation; the liberation of the great waterway; perhaps the foundation of an African India; certainly the settlement of a long dispute; these are cenotaphs which will scarcely be unregarded during the present generation.

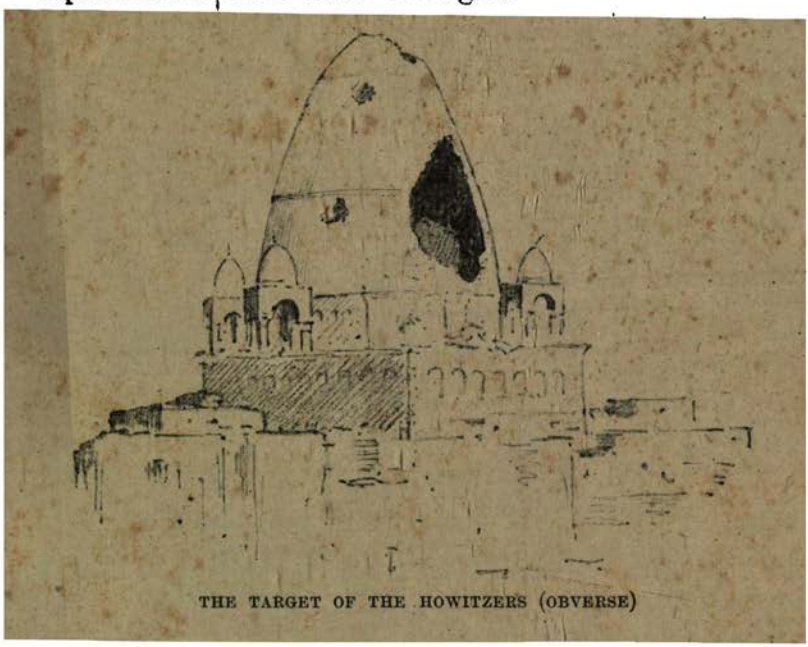
The 4th of September—the anniversary of the French Republic—may become memorable for another great event. Detachments of officers and men from every regiment, British and Egyptian, were conveyed across the Nile in the gunboats and steamers to take part in the Gordon Memorial Service, and to witness the hoisting of the British flag amid the ruins of Khartoum. Personally I devoted leisure to repose. Nevertheless, the scene and ceremony were impressive. Surrounded by the soldiers he had directed with terrible and glorious effect, the successful General ordered the flags to be hoisted; and the little red flag of the Khedive and a great Union Jack—four times as big—were run up the staffs, while the officers saluted, the men presented arms, and the band played the Egyptian National Anthem and our own. Then the Sirdar called for three cheers for Her Majesty. Nor was the response without that subdued yet intense enthusiasm which stirs the sober and phlegmatic races of the North only

on rare occasions. And there were some who cheered because of a victory over men; some in exultation of the conquest of territory; some that a heavy debt had been heavily paid; and others that the war was over and they would presently return home. But I would have raised my voice and helmet in honour of that persevering British people who—often affronted, often checked, often delayed—usually get their own way in the end.

The memorial service followed, and the solemn words of the English Prayer-book were read in that distant garden. More than thirteen years had passed since the decapitated trunk of the Imperial Envoy had been insulted by the Arab mob. The lonely man had perished; but his memory had proved a spell to draw his countrymen through many miles and many dangers, that they might do him honour and clear their own, and near his unknown grave, on the scene of his famous death, might pay the only tributes of respect and affection which lie within the power of men, however strongly they be banded together, however well they may be armed.

The bands played their dirge and Gordon's favourite hymn, 'Abide with me'; a gunboat on the river crashed out the salute, sending the live shells—for they had no blank ammunition—spinning away up the White Nile; the Highlanders piped a long lament; and thus the ceremony was duly fulfilled. Nine thousand of those who would have prevented it lay dead on the plain of Omdurman. Other thousands were scattered in the wilderness, or crawled wounded

to the river for water. And if the British people had cared to indulge in the more indecent pleasures of triumph, they might reasonably have commanded the stonemason to bring his hammer and his chisel and cut on the pedestal of Gordon's statue in Trafalgar Square the sinister word 'Avenged!

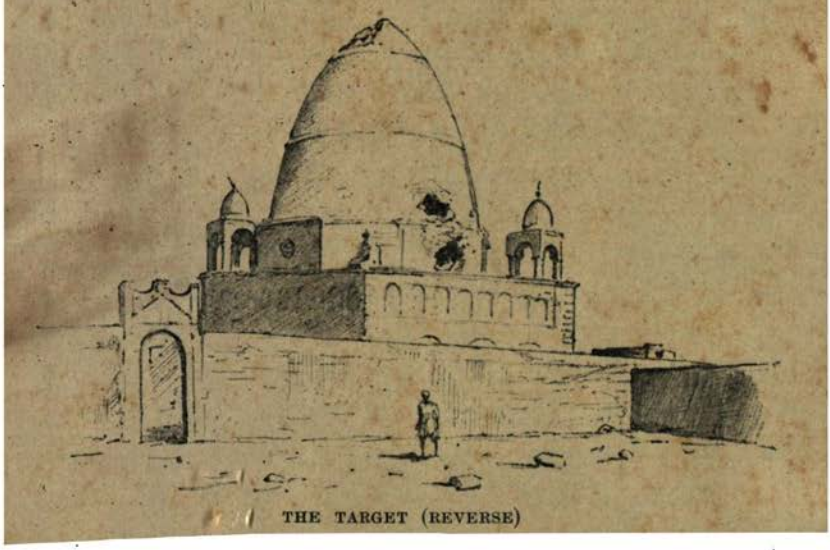


THE TARGET OF THE HOWITZERS (OBVERSE)

After the service was over the Sirdar turned and shook hands with his generals and principal officers, and each congratulated the other upon the fortunate termination of the long and difficult task. Major Snow produced his pint of champagne, which had lagged so long on its journey to Khartoum. With the assistance of a few friends who had passed, like the bottle and its owner, safely through the actions of Abu Klea and Abu Kru, and the battles of the Atbara and Omdurman, it

was at last opened, and caused more enthusiasm than so small a quantity of wine could possibly have created unless assisted by the local circumstances.

Having defeated the enemy and taken his city, it was neither inappropriate nor unlikely that the conquerors should wish to examine the prize of war, and there were many visitors to Omdurman. The victorious army lay straggled along the river from the



THE TARGET (REVERSE)

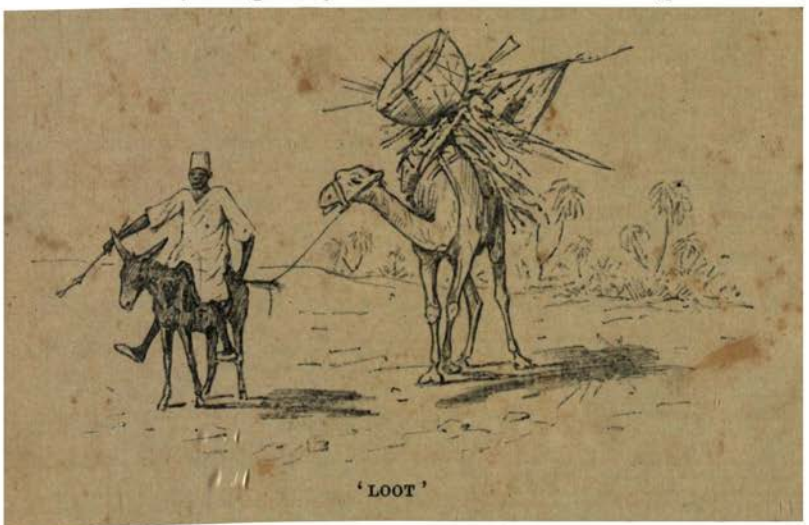
muddy waters of Khor Shambat to the suburbs of the town, a distance of nearly three miles. The southern end of the camp was already among the mud houses. Yet it was a ride of twenty minutes to the Great Wall. The road was as broad as Piccadilly and beaten level by much traffic. On both sides were mud houses. At the end the dome of the Mahdi's Tomb, much damaged by the shells, rose conspicuously.

About a quarter of a mile from this we reach on

the left, as Baedeker would say, the wall of the city itself. As an obstacle the wall appears most formidable. The stones are well laid in regular courses, and the thickness is great. The officers who had toiled with the big 40-pounder guns all the way from Cairo eyed it with disappointed appetite. They had hoped to smash it to pieces. Unfortunately, the foolish people had opened their gates and prevented the fun. It was possible, however, to see the effect of the artillery on the water side. Here the gunboats had been at work at close and effective range. The results were remarkable. Great round holes had been made in the wall, which was perhaps eight feet thick. They were as neat and clean as if they had been punched in leather. There was no *débris*. A storming party would not have had to stumble over ruins of bricks and mortar. The impact of the shells had removed everything—disintegrated everything. The wind had blown the powder that remained away. Where there had been an obstacle, there was now an open doorway.

Within the wall were many horrible sights. Much killing and the paying-off of old scores had followed the downfall of the Khalifa's power and preceded the organisation of the new government. It had been a stormy interregnum! Dead bodies of men and women lay about the streets and in the narrow alleys. Some were the victims of the bombardment, some of the Maxim guns which had been used to clear the walls, but the greater number were a silent statement of the results of the continual firing we had listened to on the night of the battle.

The Khalifa's house, the Mahdi's Tomb, the Arsenal, and the Treasury were situate outside the great wall of Omdurman. The first is a building of some pretensions. The house itself was one-storeyed, but there was an annex which attained to the dignity of two rows of windows. I visited this first, climbing up a narrow but solid staircase which gave access to the upper room —an apartment about twenty feet square. What its contents may originally have been, it was impossible



'LOOT'

to say. The whole place was picked clean, and nothing had escaped the vigilant eye of the Soudanese plunderer. There was a hole in one of the walls, and floor and ceiling were spotted with scars. The shell which had caused the damage lay in splinters on the ground. The yellow sublimate of the Lyddite furred the interior surfaces of the pieces of iron with an evil-smelling powder. For the rest the room was bare.

From the windows a view might be obtained of the

city. The whole prospect was revealed. Row after row, and line on line of mud houses extended on every side. The sight was not inspiring. The ugliness and universal squalor jarred unpleasantly on the eye and fancy. Yet we may imagine the Khalifa only a week before standing at this very window and looking over the homes of the thousands he ruled, proud of their numbers, confident of their strength, ignorant of their degradation. It was true Mahmud was prisoner and his army scattered. It was true the accursed infidels had crawled with their host to the south of Shabluka, so that they were but thirty miles away. It was true that their steamers and cavalry would be at the gates before many hours had passed. Of this, and all this, there was no doubt. But the battle was not fought yet. There were 50,000 faithful Dervishes ready to die or conquer for their dread Lord and for the successor of 'the expected Mahdi.' Surely they should prevail against the unbeliever, despite his big guns, his little guns, and all his iniquitous contrivances. Surely Allah would not let the True Faith perish or the Holy Shrine of his Mahdi be defiled. They would be victorious. They would kill this Egyptian rabble—he thought of ways and means—whose backs they had seen so often; and they would roll back to Cairo, as they had done before, the pestilent white men who had come from out of the unknown to annoy them and disturb their peace. And the Khalifa, soothed by such comfortable reflections, remembered that he had that day married a new wife, and turned his thoughts to the house he would build for her, when the

bricks should be ferried across from the Khartoum ruins.

The rest of the Khalifa's house was practically uninjured by the shell-fire. It was an extremely good dwelling. The doorway gave access to a small central hall paved with black stone, and with rooms and offices opening out on each side. One of these contained a fine large bath, with brass taps for hot and cold water. The other chambers may have been used for sleeping, or eating, or study; but as they had been stripped of every stick of furniture, it was impossible to tell. The house had been, at any rate, the abode of one who must have possessed civilised qualities, since he was cleanly and showed some appreciation of the decencies of life.

From the Khalifa's house I repaired to the Mahdi's Tomb. The reader's mind is possibly familiar with its shape and architecture. It was much damaged by the shell-fire. The apex of the conical dome had been cut off. One of the small cupolas was completely destroyed. The dome itself had one enormous and several smaller holes smashed in it; the bright sunlight streamed through these and displayed the interior. Everything was wrecked. Still, it was possible to distinguish the painted brass railings round the actual sarcophagus, and the stone beneath which the body presumably lay. This place had been for more than ten years the most sacred and holy thing that the people of the Soudan knew. Their miserable lives had perhaps been brightened, perhaps in some way ennobled by the contemplation of something which

they did not quite understand, but which they believed exerted a protecting influence. It had gratified that instinctive desire for the mystic which all human creatures possess, and which is perhaps the strongest reason for believing in a progressive destiny and a future state. By Sir H. Kitchener's orders the Tomb has been profaned and razed to the ground. The corpse of the Mahdi was dug up. The head was separated from the body, and, to quote the official explanation, 'preserved for future disposal'—a phrase which must in this case be understood to mean, that it was passed from hand to hand till it reached Cairo. Here it remained, an interesting trophy, until the affair came to the ears of Lord Cromer, who ordered it to be immediately reinterred at Wady Halfa. The limbs and trunk were flung into the Nile. Such was the chivalry of the conquerors!

Whatever misfortunes the life of Mohammed Ahmed may have caused, he was a man of considerable nobility of character, a priest, a soldier, and a patriot. He won great battles; he stimulated and revived religion. He founded an empire. To some extent he reformed the public morals. Indirectly, by making slaves into soldiers, he diminished slavery. It is impossible for any impartial person to read the testimony of such men as Slatin and Ohrwalder without feeling that the only gentle influence, the only humane element in the hard Mohammedan State, emanated from this famous rebel. The Greek missionary writes of 'his unruffled smile, pleasant manners, generosity, and equable tem-

perament.'[3] When the Christian priests, having refused to accept the Koran, were assailed by the soldiers and the mob and threatened with immediate death, it was the Mahdi who, 'seeing them in danger, turned back and ordered them to walk in front of his camel for protection.'[4] When Slatin went to report the death of the unhappy French adventurer Olivier Pain, the Mahdi 'took it to heart much more than the Khalifa, said several sympathetic words, and read the prayers for the dead.'[5] To many of his prisoners he showed kindness, all the more remarkable by comparison with his surroundings and with the treatment which he would have received had fortune failed him. To some he gave employment; to others a little money from the Beit-al-Mal, or a little food from his own plate. To all he spoke with dignity and patience. Thus he lived; and when he died in the enjoyment of unquestioned power, he was bewailed by the army he had led to victory and by the people he had freed from the yoke of the 'Turks.'

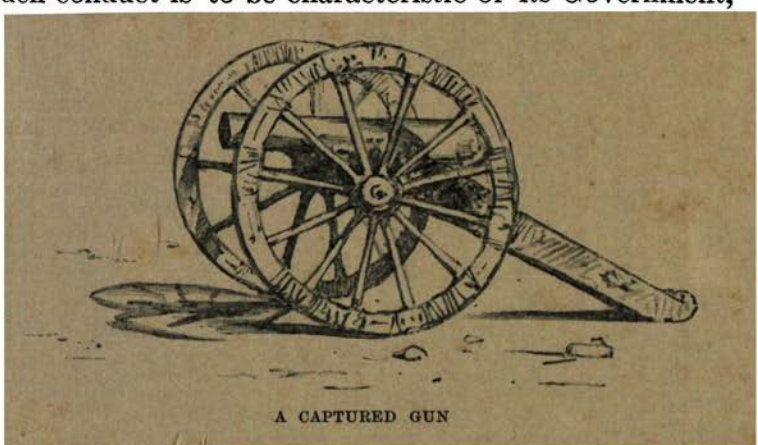
It may be worth while to examine the arguments of those who seek to justify the demolition of the Tomb. Their very enumeration betrays a confusion of thought which suggests insincerity. Some say that the people of the Soudan no longer believed in the Mahdi and cared nothing for the destruction of a fallen idol, and that therefore the matter was of little consequence. Others contend on the same side of the argument that so

[3] Ohrwalder, *Ten Years' Captivity in the Mahdi's Camp.*
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] Slatin, *Fire and Sword in the Soudan.*

great was the Mahdi's influence, and so powerful was his memory, that though his successor had been overthrown his tomb would have become a place of pilgrimage, and that the conquering Power did not dare allow such an element of fanaticism to disturb their rule. The contradiction is apparent. But either argument is absurd without the contradiction. If the people of the Soudan cared no more for the Mahdi, then it was an act of Vandalism and folly to destroy the only fine building which might attract the traveller and interest the historian. It is a gloomy augury for the future of the Soudan that the first action of its civilised conquerors and present ruler should have been to level the one pinnacle which rose above the mud houses. If, on the other hand, the people of the Soudan still venerated the memory of the Mahdi—and more than 50,000 had fought hard only a week before to assert their respect and belief—then I shall not hesitate to declare that to destroy what was sacred and holy to them was a wicked act, of which the true Christian, no less than the philosopher, must express his abhorrence.

No man who holds by the splendid traditions of the old Liberal party, no man who is in sympathy with the aspirations of Progressive Toryism, can consistently consent to such behaviour. It will also be condemned by quite a different school of thought, by the wise public servants who administer the Indian Empire. It is an actual offence against the Indian Penal Code to insult the religion of any person; nor is it a valid plea that the culprit thought the said religion 'false.' When Sir Bindon Blood had forced the Tanga Pass

and invaded Buner, one of his first acts was to permit his Mohammedan soldiers to visit the Tomb of the Akhund of Swat, who had stirred the tribes into revolt and caused the Umbeyla campaign of 1863. It is because respect is always shown to all shades of religious feeling in India by the dominant race, that our rule is accepted by the mass of the people. If the Soudan is to be administered on principles the reverse of those which have been successful in India, and if such conduct is to be characteristic of its Government,



A CAPTURED GUN

then it would be better if Gordon had never given his life nor Kitchener won his victories.[6]

The road from the Tomb to the Arsenal was crowded with Soudanese soldiers, dragging captured cannon from the river batteries to a convenient storage place. The Arsenal itself consisted of a large and strongly built square building in a courtyard, surrounded by a high

[6] I differ from the Author on this matter, and I agree with Lord Cromer that the destruction of the Mahdi's Tomb and the removal of his body were necessary and justifiable, though I do not approve of the manner in which it was done.—EDITOR.

stone wall. Military material of all kinds and of all periods was heaped and littered about. Gatling and Nordenfeldt guns—taken, perhaps, at the destruction of Hicks Pasha's army—stood near suits of chain armour which a Crusader may once have worn. Spears of all sorts and patterns were piled into great stacks. Here were heaps of Remington rifles; there were battle-axes and javelins. The Krupp and the war-drum lay side by side. Among all, and carelessly scattered about, was gunpowder in bags, in barrels, or lying in little black heaps on the ground.

I do not purpose to set down an inventory. Yet the enumeration of six items may be of interest, and may show how diverse was the collection which years of rapine had gathered into this curious store-house.

There was a fine drum-major's staff ornamented with gold and surmounted by the Lion of Abyssinia. This was presumably captured from King John's ill-fated army. There was a wooden provision box containing sardines and other potted meats, which were wrapped up in a sheet of the *Étoile Belge* newspaper bearing the date March 24, 1894. This had come, evidently, from the Congo. Perhaps it had belonged to the gay Lothaire. There was an excellent chronometer by a well-known London maker, in perfect order, and probably taken from some wrecked ship in the Red Sea. General Gordon's telescope, as bright and clean as on the last day he had looked through it from the palace roof towards the north and hoped against hope, stood in one of the rooms. On the floor of

another lay the bell of the Khartoum church. Last of all I would notice the Khalifa's carriage.

This vehicle, which should one day grace Madame Tussaud's halls, stood in the courtyard. It was shaped like a victoria, with a prolonged hood which extended over the box-seat, and was there supported by two iron bars. It was made by a French firm—Erler, Paris—and may or may not have been a purchase of the Khedive Ismail. The whole turn-out was now covered with gaudily coloured cloths of various hues. The hood was red outside and flame-coloured yellow inside. The floor was carpeted with puce. The steps and the interior seat were lined with violet. The box-seat was cobalt-blue. It had evidently been covered with the end of a roll of cloth; for across it, in broad, white, embroidered letters two inches high, the following legend was proudly displayed: 'SUPERFINE BROADCLOTH, MADE IN GERMANY.'

The calm assurance of the statement, not less than its incongruity, might well provoke a smile amid the horrors of war. But other reflections lie behind. We may consider how strange and varied are the diversions of an Imperial people. Year after year, and stretching back to an indefinite horizon, we see the figures of the odd and bizarre potentates against whom the British arms continually are turned. They pass in a long procession:—The Akhund of Swat; Cetewayo, brandishing an assegai as naked as himself; Kruger, singing a psalm of victory; Osman Digna, the Immortal and the Irretrievable; Theebaw, with his Umbrella; Lobengula, gazing fondly at the pages of *Truth*;

Prempeh, abasing himself in the dust; the Mad Mullah, on his white ass; and, latest of all, the Khalifa in his coach of state. It is like a pantomime scene at Drury Lane. These extraordinary foreign figures—each with his complete set of crimes, horrible customs, and 'minor peculiarities'—march one by one from the dark wings of barbarism up to the bright footlights of civilisation. For a space their names are on the wires on the world and the tongues of men. The Sovereign on the Throne, the Minister in his Cabinet, the General in his tent, pronounce or mispronounce their styles and titles. A thousand compositors make the same combination of letters. The unusual syllables become household words. The street-boy bellows them in our ears. The artisan laughs over them at night in his cottage. The child in the nursery is cajoled into virtue or silence by the repetition of the dread accents. And then the world-audience clap their hands, amused yet impatient, and the potentates and their trains pass on, some to exile, some to prison, some to death—for it is a grim jest for them—and their conquerors, taking their possessions, forget even their names. Nor will history record such trash.

Perhaps the time will come when the supply will be exhausted, and there will be no more royal freaks to conquer. In that gloomy period there will be no more of these nice expeditions—'the image of (European) war without its guilt and only five-and-twenty per cent. its danger'; no more medals for the soldiers, no more peerages for the Generals, no more copy for the journalists. The good old times will have passed away, and the most cynical philosopher will be forced to

admit that, though the world may be much more prosperous, it can scarcely be so merry.

Another sight, besides the captured city, drew curious spectators. On the 5th of September, three days after the fight, I rode with Lord Tullibardine of the Egyptian cavalry, to examine the scene of battle.* Our road lay by the *khor* whereat the victorious army had watered in the afternoon of the 2nd, and thence across the sandy, rock-strewn plain to the southern slopes of Surgham Hill. And so we came at once on to the ground over which the 21st Lancers had charged. Its peculiar formation was the more apparent at a second view. As we looked from the spot where we had wheeled into line and begun to gallop, it was scarcely possible to believe that an extensive *khor* ran right across what appeared to be smooth and unobstructed plain. An advance of a hundred yards revealed the trap, and displayed a long ditch with steeply sloping rocky sides, about four feet in depth and perhaps twenty feet wide. In this trench lay a dozen bodies of Dervishes, half-a-dozen dead donkeys, and a litter of goat-skin water-bottles, Dervish saddles, and broken weapons. The level ground beyond was sparsely spotted with corpses. Some had been buried where they fell by their friends in the city, and their places were indicated by little mounds of lighter-coloured earth. Half-a-dozen horses, stripped of saddles and bridles, made a brown jumble in the background. In the centre a red and white lance-pennon, flying from a stick, marked the grave of the fallen Lancers. And that was all. Yet

* Map, 'The Dervish Dead,' to face page 224.

the place may be remarkable. At any rate, a great many officers of all regiments and arms had been to visit it.

We rode on. We climbed the ridge of Surgham Hill, following almost the same route as that of the 'White Flag men' three days previously. At the crest of the ridge the village and the outline of the *zeriba* came into sight, and it was evident that we had now reached the spot where the Dervish column had come into the artillery fire. All over the ground—on the average three yards apart—were dead men, clad in the white and patched smocks of faithful Dervishes. Three days of burning sun had done their work. The bodies were swollen to almost gigantic proportions. Twice as large as living men, they appeared in every sense monstrous. The more advanced corpses hardly resembled human beings, but rather great bladders such as natives use to float down the Nile on. Frightful gashes scarred their limbs, and great black stains, once crimson, covered their garments. The sight was appalling. The smell redoubled the horror.

We galloped on. A strong, hot wind blew from the west across the great plain and hurried foul and tainted to the river. Keeping to windward of the thickest clusters, we picked our way, and the story of the fight unfolded itself. Here was where the artillery had opened on the swarming masses. Men had fallen in little groups of five or six to each shell. Nearer to the *zeriba*—about 1,000 yards from it—the musketry had begun to tell, and the dead lay evenly scattered about—one every ten yards. Two hundred yards further the full force of the fire—artillery, Maxims, and

rifles—had burst on them. In places desperate rushes to get on at all costs had been made by devoted, fearless men. In such places the bodies lay so thickly as to hide the ground. Occasionally there were double layers of this hideous covering. Once I saw them lying three deep. In a space not exceeding a hundred yards square more than 400 corpses lay festering.

It is difficult to imagine the postures into which man, once created in the image of his Maker, had been twisted. It is not wise to try, for he who succeeds will ask himself with me: 'Can I ever forget?'

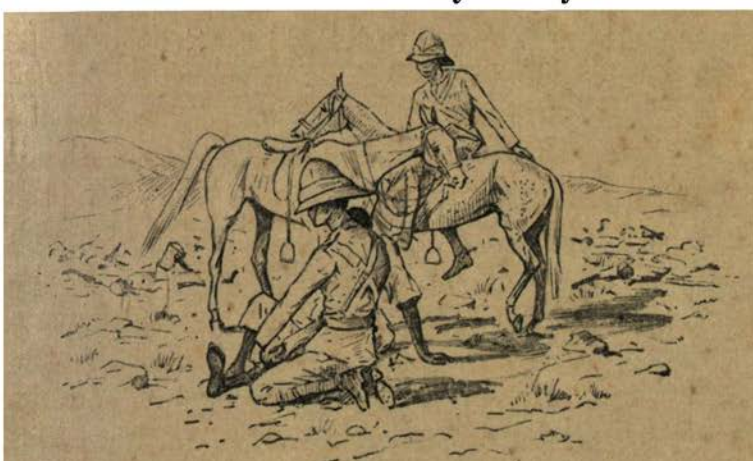
I have tried to gild war, and to solace myself for the loss of dear and gallant friends, with the thought that a soldier's death for a cause that he believes in will count for much, whatever may be beyond this world. When the soldier of a civilised Power is killed in action, his limbs are composed and his body is borne by friendly arms reverently to the grave. The wail of the fifes, the roll of the drums, the triumphant words of the Funeral Service, all divest the act of its squalor; and the spectator sympathises with, perhaps almost envies, the comrade who has found this honourable exit. But there was nothing *dulce et decorum* about the Dervish dead; nothing of the dignity of unconquerable manhood; all was filthy corruption. Yet these were as brave men as ever walked the earth. The conviction was borne in on me that their claim beyond the grave in respect of a valiant death was not less good than that which any of our countrymen could make. The thought may not be original; it may happily be untrue; it seemed certainly most unwelcome.

The incidents of the battle might be traced by the lines and patches of the slain. Here was where MacDonald's brigade, the three artillery batteries, and eight Maxim guns had repulsed the Khalifa's attack. A great heap of corpses lay round the spot where the Black Flag had been captured. There was where the brigade had faced about to meet Ali-Wad-Helu and Osman Sheikh-ed-Din. There, again, was where the Baggara cavalry had made their last splendid charge to certain death. The white-clad bodies of the men were intermingled with the brown and bay horses, so that this part of the field looked less white-speckled than the rest. They had ridden straight at the solid line of bayonets and in the teeth of the storm of projectiles. Every man had galloped at full speed, and when he fell he shot many lengths in front of his horse, rolling over and over—destroyed, not conquered, by machinery.

At such sights the triumph of victory faded on the mind, and a mournful feeling of disgust grew stronger. All this was bad to see, but worse remained; after the dead, the wounded. The officer or soldier who escapes from the field with a wound has a claim on his country. To the private it may mean a pension; to the officer a gratuity, perhaps a 'mention in despatches,' certainly advancement in his profession. The scar may even, when the sting has departed, be a source of pride—an excuse to re-tell the story. To soothe the pain there are anæsthetics; to heal the injury the resources of science are at hand. It was otherwise with the Dervish wounded.

There may have been wounded Dervishes among

the heaps of slain. The atmosphere forbade approach. There certainly were many scattered about the plain. We approached these cautiously and, pistol in hand, examined their condition. Lord Tullibardine had a large water-bottle. He dismounted, and gave a few drops to each till it was all gone. You must remember that this was three days after the fight, and that the sun had beaten down mercilessly all the time. Some of the wounded were very thirsty. It would

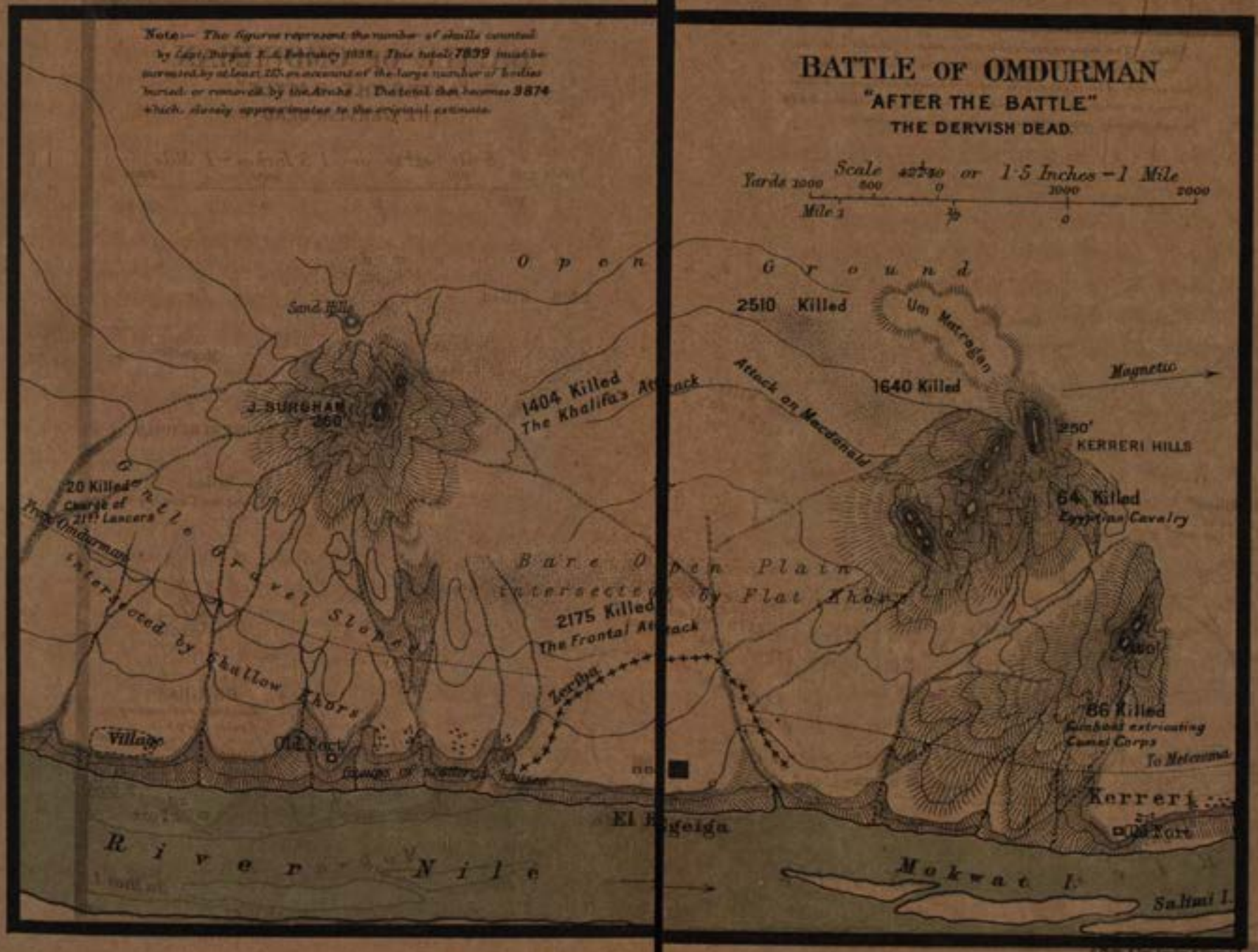


A SURGICAL OPERATION

have been a grateful sight to see a large bucket of clear, cool water placed before each shaking, feverish figure. That, or a nameless man with a revolver and a big bag of cartridges, would have seemed merciful. The scenes were pathetic. Where there was a shady bush four men had crawled to die. Someone had spread a rag on the thorns to increase the shade. Three of the unfortunate creatures had attained their object; the fourth survived. He was shot through

both legs. The bullet—a Martini-Henry bullet—had lodged in the right knee-cap: The whole limb was stiffened. We gave him a drink. You would not think such joy could come from a small cup of water. Tullibardine examined his injury. Presently he pulled out his knife, and after much probing and cutting extracted the bullet—with the button-hook. I have seen, and shall see perchance again, a man with a famous name worse employed.

Would the reader be further sickened with the horrors of the field? There was a man that had crawled a mile in three days, but was yet two miles from the river. He had one foot; the other remained behind. I wonder if he ever reached the water he had struggled so hard to attain! There was a man with both legs shattered; he had dragged himself along in a sitting posture, making perhaps four hundred yards a day. The extraordinary vitality of these poor wretches only prolonged their torments. So terrible were the sights and smells that the brain failed to realise the suffering and agony they proclaimed. As a man faints and his body refuses to suffer beyond a certain degree under torture, so the mind was unable to appreciate that an arrangement of line and colour lying on the ground was a human being, partly putrefied but still alive. Perhaps stern Nature, more merciful than stern civilisation, lent a kindly delirium. But I must record the fact that most of the men I saw were sane, and capable of feeling every pang. And meanwhile they all struggled towards the Nile, the great river of their country, without which the invaders could never have



Longmans Green & Co London, New York & Bombay.

come upon them, but which they nevertheless did not reproach. One man had reached it and lay exhausted, but content, on the bank. Another had attained the water and had died at its brim. Let us hope he had his drink first.

All this was three days after the action. Yet on the 9th of September, when a week had passed, there were still a few wounded who had neither died nor crawled away, but continued to suffer. How had they lived? It is not possible that they could have existed so long without food and water. The women and the disarmed population of Omdurman had been busy. Many hundreds not quite helpless had dragged themselves off and died all along the line of retreat. Those who were from the country round Omdurman had succour from their relations and neighbours; but it was bad for the man who had come from far and had no friends. The women would perhaps spare him a few drops of water—enough to help him through the day—but if he were a stranger, they would do no more.

Thus it was that these painful and shocking cases occurred, and it is not easy to see how they could have been prevented. The statement that 'the wounded Dervishes received every delicacy and attention' is so utterly devoid of truth that it transcends the limits of mendacity and passes into the realms of the ridiculous. I was impatient to get back to the camp. There was nothing to be gained by dallying on the field, unless a man were anxious to become quite callous, so that no imaginable misery which could come to human flesh

would ever have moved him again. I may have written in these pages something of vengeance and of the paying of a debt. It may be that vengeance is sweet, and that the gods forbade vengeance to men because they reserved for themselves so delicious and intoxicating a drink. But no one should drain the cup to the bottom. The dregs are often filthy-tasting.

So as the haze deepened into the gloom of the night, and the uncertain outlines of the distant hills faded altogether from the view, we rode back to camp—'home to Omdurman,' and left the field of battle to its silent occupants. There they lie, those valiant warriors of a false faith and fallen domination; their only history preserved by their conquerors; their only monument, their bones—and these the drifting sand of the desert will bury in a few short years. Three days before I had seen them rise—eager, confident, resolved. The roar of their shouting had swelled like the surf on a rocky shore. The flashing of their blades had displayed their numbers, their vitality, their ferocity. They were confident in their strength, in the justice of their cause, in the support of their religion. Now only the heaps of corruption in the plain, and the fugitives dispersed and scattered in the wilderness, remained. The terrible machinery of scientific war had done its work. The Dervish host was scattered and destroyed. Their end, however, only anticipates that of the victors; for Time, which laughs at science, as science laughs at valour, will in due course contemptuously brush both combatants away.

Yet it may happen in some distant age, when a

mighty system of irrigation has changed the desolate plain of Omdurman into a fertile garden, and the mud hovels of the town have given place to the houses, the schools, and the theatres of a great metropolis, that the husbandman, turning up a skull amid the luxuriant crop, will sapiently remark: 'There was aforetime a battle here.' Thus the event will be remembered.

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CHAPTER XXII

THE RETURN OF THE BRITISH DIVISION

Homewards ho!—Knights of the pen—The 21st Lancers—A great compliment—The charge—Its object—Its cause—Its results—A wider view—With the Grenadiers—Nights along the Nile—A storm—Wreckage—Royan Island—The Shabluka Cataract—At dusk—The first battalion—Atbara again—The Desert Railway—An incident—The faith of Islam—Philæ—The eternal river.

ALTHOUGH I am bold enough to hope that the narrative has described the campaigns, sufficiently to promote a realisation of their horrors without exciting disgust, and an appreciation of their hardships without creating weariness, yet I do not doubt that the reader will turn his face towards home as gladly as the soldiers. The war is over, the battle has been won, the city is captured, and its ruler is a fugitive. The army that had for thirteen years dominated the Soudan is destroyed or dispersed. Its place is occupied by another army; and though the new Government will be more exacting and more vigorous than the old, there is reason to hope that it will be more beneficent. Whatever control is imposed on that Government will be exerted directly or indirectly from Westminster. There is nothing to be gained in waiting longer in these desolate lands. The British contingent starts for the north at once, its officers and men quite content,

so far as they are concerned, to leave the administration of Egypt to the Egyptians, and that of the Soudan to the Soudanese. Everyone who can possibly secure a spell of leave is off to Cairo and London, and I purpose to conduct the reader down the river without delay. There are still several matters which must be recorded—the operations against Ahmed Fedil, the attempt to capture the Khalifa, and the Fashoda incident—but of these we may inform ourselves by reading the newspapers, in comfort and at leisure, in countries where the sun is not so hot, the climate less dangerous, and the food not taken out of tins. Amid more agreeable surroundings we may find opportunity to reflect upon and to discuss the events of the war and their probable consequences. We may canvass individuals, apportion praise and blame, examine the military manœuvres, weigh their results, and endeavour to estimate their consequences. Our minds, no longer disturbed by the presence of danger and the clash of arms, may turn refreshed to great questions of policy and principle. From a distance, as from a great height, the whole situation will be clearly displayed and the eye may range over a wider prospect. We may investigate without prejudice, affirm without fear, and criticise without acrimony. But while we are in the theatre of active operations, we are subject to military law, and such conduct would scarcely be decorous or even safe. So from every point of view it is expedient to bid farewell to the Soudan.

All the might of the Dervish Empire had been

centralised in its capital. As soon, therefore, as Omdurman was taken, the Khalifa's power was smashed, and it only remained to pick up the pieces. For this work the expensive labour of British troops was not required, and within four days of the fall of the city the regiments and battalions began to move north. The arrangements for the return journey were as admirably calculated as those leading to the concentration. The result of the operations had been assumed before it was attained. The British Division had left Wad Hamed on the 27th of August with twenty-one days' supplies, and they were all therefore due back at the Atbara before the 17th of September. Their transports had been ordered to await them at Alexandria and Suez by the end of the month. It was desirable that they should be punctual.

Accordingly on the 6th of September the camp at Omdurman began to break up. The wounded had already been despatched, and had made a swift journey to the base hospital at Abadia by steamer. The 'birds of Paradise' [1] and the Press correspondents went next, the latter protesting violently. Strange rumours were afoot about Fashoda, and it was their duty to stay. The Sirdar was, however, inexorable. His ultimatum was laconic. 'Now or never,' he said; and a few square yards of the *Bordein*, a rickety, filthy steamer,

[1] '*Birds of Paradise.*'—These rare and curious creatures are occasionally met with in the vicinity of armies. Like the stormy petrel heralding the tempest, they appear shortly before an engagement. They are very delicate. Their breasts are covered with a beautiful bright-coloured plumage, which grows very rapidly and increases with their age. They are very rarely shot.

just captured from the Dervishes, was placed at their disposal. A large number of details both British and Egyptian, a dozen sick officers, a score of Lancers whose horses had been killed in the charge or were unfit to march, all kinds of human odds and ends, and piles of baggage littered the decks, and on and among this confused jumble perched the three and twenty gentlemen who had, at the peril of their lives and the loss of their comfort, undertaken to supply the world with news. There had originally been twenty-six. One had been killed in the battle; one was dying of fever at Royan island; one was with the wounded at Abadia. The rest—huddled together on board the overloaded *Bordein*—could, I think, congratulate themselves that they had earned whatever their employers might pay.

The first troops to move north were the 21st Lancers. Yet, although they started thus early, they were the last to arrive in Cairo; for whereas the infantry were swiftly carried in boats down the Nile, the cavalry had to march along the bank to the Atbara. I was fortunate in being selected for some service with the transport, and did not accompany the column. The Sirdar paid the Lancers a compliment—which was all the more marked, since he paid it to no other troops—not even to those regiments who had served under his command at the action of the Atbara and throughout the summer: he came to see them off.

Colonel Martin formed up his regiment in *mass* and made the prescribed salutes. The Sirdar rode forward. I give a *verbatim* report of his speech,

since it tends to show that he is a man of deeds. He said:

'Colonel Martin, officers and men of the 21st Lancers, I am very proud to have had you under my command. The fine charge you made the other day will long go down to history in the annals of your regiment. I will not keep you any longer, but I hope you will have a pleasant march down to the Atbara.'

Whereupon the Lancers gave three cheers for a victorious General, and retired in column of troops from the right. I watched the regiment ride across the plain—a brown, moving column of men, with a cloud of dust drifting towards the river. Before them the outline of Surgham Hill—they say it will be called 'Lancers' Hill' for the future—was silhouetted black against the evening sky. Their road led them across the scene of their charge, and perhaps I may be allowed to revert for a space to that memorable event.

The glamour of a cavalry charge impresses a wide public. Thousands of people who care little, and know less, of the more intricate and delicate operations of war are attracted by the dramatic aspect which such an incident presents. This keen interest must call forth a great deal of unmeasured eulogy and of extravagant expression. It is not fitting that those sentiments of duty and patriotism which rise from the altar and the hearth should descend to the music-hall and the pot-house. Once praise oversteps the strict line of truth, it becomes fulsome and ridiculous. It may be worth while for a moment to consider dispassionately what the Lancers dared and what they

did. I may claim to write with both knowledge and impartiality, since I was myself a participant in the charge, without being a member of the regiment.

First of all let us consider whether the charge was necessary. Colonel Martin's orders were to clear the ground between the army and Omdurman, and to endeavour to cut off the flying Dervishes from that city.

It was not possible to carefully reconnoitre the ground or enemy, because the whole plain was infested with small parties of Arabs. Nothing less than a squadron could move about freely. The ground from the commanding position of the ridge looked smooth and safe. The two patrols who were sent out returned heavily fired on, having obtained their information at the risk of their lives. Every possible precaution was taken; the rest had to be left to chance. 'We are defeated on sea,' exclaimed Napoleon on a famous occasion, 'because my admirals have learnt—where I know not—that war can be made without running risks.' It will not be denied that it is the business of officers to carry out their orders—safely if they can, but in any case to carry them out. The moment was fleeting; the matter was urgent. The General's instructions were precise; and, I repeat, the ground looked perfectly safe. The regiment accordingly advanced, and advancing found their path barred by a formed body of the enemy. These suddenly opened an intense fire.

Colonel Martin thereupon ordered an immediate charge. The decision has been much criticised. One writer has suggested that the Lancers should have fallen back and reported the state of affairs to the

infantry. If such a spirit is to animate British cavalry, it is fortunate that they are so seldom employed. But it was not a question of preference.

I shall submit that there was no choice but to charge or gallop away. The definite orders excluded the latter alternative. In any case, there was no time to argue. At that close range it was impossible so heavy a fire could be ineffective. Had Colonel Martin tried to retire, he would have lost at least thirty men by the musketry, and his regiment might very easily have finished their gallop to the rear in a disordered mass by the bank of the river. The spectacle might have provoked some comment. The charge was the inevitable consequence of the advance. If the advance was justified, it follows that the charge was necessary.

From a technical point of view I would make one observation. It would have been perhaps better to have attacked in two lines—or, at any rate, with some sort of reserve. As soon as the firing began there was, of course, no time for such dispositions. It is easy to criticise with complete knowledge, in safety, and at leisure the actions of men done at hazard in a moment; but it is not theoretically correct for a cavalry regiment to move on to suspicious ground with its whole force in the front line. When the Lancers left the hill, it would have been wise to send on a contact squadron. This could have brushed away the small parties of Dervishes and would have discovered the true strength of the ambuscade. The contact squadron, fired into at short range, would not have fallen back. The reasons that enforced the charge on the regiment would have com-

pelled the squadron to attack to extricate itself. And the regiment, following, would have had to attack to extricate the squadron. The charge would not have been averted. Its effects, however, might have been enhanced, for the succession of attacks would have produced greater disorder among the Dervishes than the single charge. I do not pretend that this occurred to me at the moment. It is the opinion of several distinguished cavalry officers. It is, in any case, a matter for the experts.

The charge began. Immediately it became apparent that the enemy's force was unexpectedly great—indeed, that it was three times as great as had been believed. It was then quite impossible to turn back. It was not even desirable to do so. The result proved that the 2,700 Dervishes were not a force beyond the powers of the cavalry. The charge was pushed home. In this I see nothing splendid, nothing magnificent, nothing that the disciplined cavalry of any European nation might not reasonably be expected to perform.

I pass to the achievement. If the number of the enemy was three times as great as was expected, the results were proportionately increased. Two thousand seven hundred unshaken and formed infantry, famous for the use of their weapons, famous for their valour and contemptuous of cavalry, were overthrown, ridden through, and finally driven from the ground. This was due, I most firmly believe, to the excellence of the drill, which enabled the regiment to strike the enemy in a solid wall of men and horses. And the excellence of the drill was due to the excellent individual qualities

of the troopers. I do not think that it required any high order of courage merely to charge; but the manner in which the charge was delivered is worthy of the highest praise, and proved conclusively that the soldiers were men of great calmness, determination, and capacity. The fact that they rode through an enemy, whose closely packed line was more than twelve deep, shows that they were also men of considerable physical strength.

It was afterwards that the heroic element began to appear. The extraordinary celerity with which the squadrons re-formed, the soldierly eagerness of the troopers to charge again, their steady and effective musketry when they were presently dismounted, showed that a loss of more than fifteen per cent. had not in the least impaired their *morale* or disturbed their equanimity. The observer might realise in a small way 'that strength and majesty with which the British soldier fights.' No savagery disgraced their victory; no excitement ruffled their serenity. After the charge they remained what they had been before it—simply good and gallant men, well trained to war, ready and willing to obey any orders they might receive. And what is the material from which such soldiers are made? They were specimens of the warlike Briton at his best—the six-year-old English soldier. These were no boys following their officers in blind ignorance. They were no conscripts marched in a row to their deaths. Every man was an intelligent human being, who thought for himself, acted for himself, took pride in himself, and knew his own mind. Spontaneity, not mere passive obedience, was the characteristic of

their charge. They exhibited the discipline of a pack of hounds, not that of a flock of sheep.

We may now discern the reason why this charge—which did not greatly influence the fortunes of the battle—was of perhaps as great value to the Empire as the victory itself. Many may have heard of—some may perhaps have seen—occasions when a young, raw British regiment, broken with fever and rotten with disease, has not shown those intrinsic fighting virtues, without which no race can long continue to rule. Perhaps there may have been moments when we have doubted whether those qualities which enabled our ancestors to conquer are unimpaired; whether the blood of the race circulates as healthy and as free as in days gone by. All great empires have been destroyed by success and triumph. No empire of the past has enjoyed so full a measure of that fatal glory as the British. The patriot who boasts his faith in our destiny may often look anxiously back—fearing, almost expecting, to discover signs of degeneration and decay. From the study of the men—I mean, the troopers—who charged on the 2nd of September 'the weary Titan' may rise refreshed, and, contemplating the past with calmness, may feel confidence in the present and high hope in the future. We can still produce soldiers worthy of their officers—and there has hitherto been no complaint about the officers.

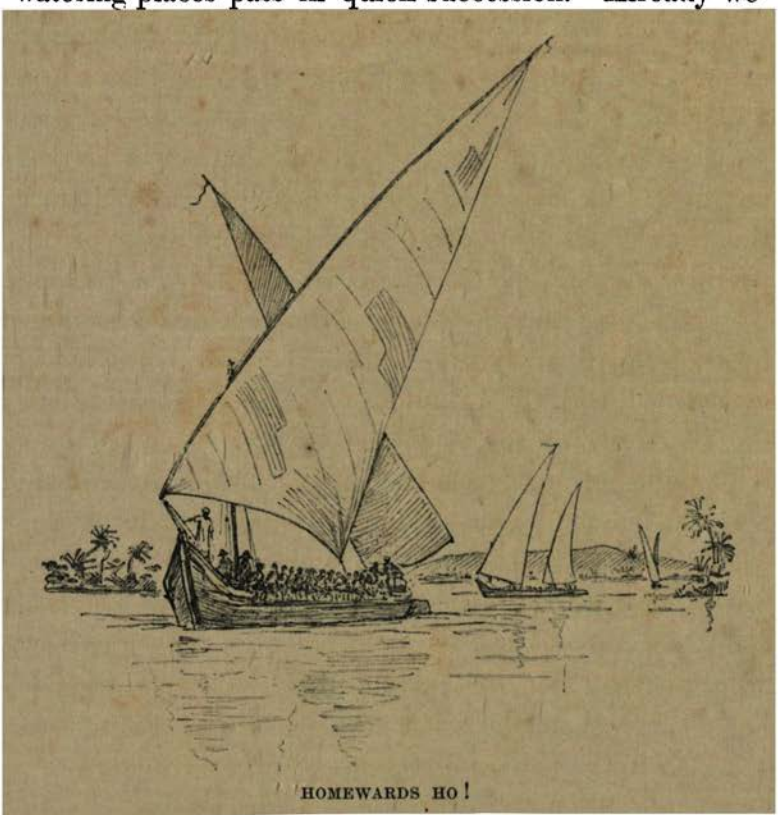
It was with such satisfying, if self-satisfied, reflections that I watched the Lancers trail away towards the fateful hill, watched them climb the ridge and disappear in the reeking plain beyond. It was the

regiment's baptism of fire and steel. They have no long list of battles on their appointments and crests. They have no proud traditions handed down from wars in France, in Spain, and in the Low Countries. But they will now inscribe the word 'Khartoum' as the first honour on the regimental arms; and some of them will be quite contented with that.

My transport duties having been satisfactorily discharged, I accompanied the Grenadier Guards down the river. Every night that week witnessed the departure of one or other of the British battalions. All day long the flotilla of broad-bottomed sailing-boats lay moored by the bank. Then, as the shadows lengthened and the evening breeze began to freshen, the lashings were cast off, and the boats pushed into the middle of the stream. The flowing white canvas was hoisted, and like a flight of enormous birds the whole fleet started for home and comfort with the warm, south wind in the shoulder of the sails and the flood Nile pressing six miles an hour at the keel. The pace was swift, yet the current was barely outstripped. As one looked at the water, the boats seemed motionless. Only the banks slipped past. How easily all the weary miles of march were covered! The strong river was impatient to be rid of the invaders who had disturbed its waters. The farewell cheers of the remaining regiments grew faint and broken. The strains of the Soudanese band playing 'The British Grenadiers' died away. The mud houses and the bivouacs on the bank were lost in the distance and in the twilight, and men

turned their minds and faces towards a cooler, kinder land whither they would presently return.

It was very strange, going down the river in this pleasant fashion, to watch the camping-grounds and watering-places pass in quick succession. Already we



HOMEWARDS HO!

were near the scene of the action. Here was the *khor* where all had drunk on the day itself. A little lower down the old *zeriba* we had defended came into view. The scarlet glint of a lance-pennon under a tree near the water marked the cairn over Robert Grenfell's grave, and we paid the only tribute in our power—

a mournful thought—to the memory of that gallant young officer, of whom, as of Young Siward, it may be said:

> He only lived, but till he was a man;
> The which, no sooner had his prowess confirmed
> In the unshrinking station where he fought,
> But like a man he died.

And so onwards, northwards, homewards, while the night grew dark above the boats and hid them from each other, and the little fires which twinkled on the stern to cook the evening meal alone showed that we drifted in company. Presently the stars came out, and by their light intensified the blackness of the moving lines of bushes on the banks, and increased the glitter of the disturbed waters of the river.

The philosophical reflections which such scenes and surroundings cannot fail to raise in the speculative mind were dispelled by the wind shifting to the east and blowing harder every minute. The sails were pulled down hastily, and none too soon, and the boats were hurriedly brought to rest on the western bank. But the storm was on us. Clouds of dust began to drive across the river, making night hideous and existence hateful. The mouth, nostrils, eyes, and ears were choked with this abominable gravel. It penetrated the clothing, and an odious feeling of grit prevented sleep and strained patience. This, however, was but a prelude. The wind increased. Gradually raindrops began to mingle with the dust. Presently they predominated. Then the rain broke, and everything and everybody were speedily drenched. The rain, modifying the dust, covered the soldiers with a coat of mud. Meanwhile

the waves of the Nile were rising to the whipping of the wind, and they began to dash over the moored boats, driving their occupants to take shelter among the thorn bushes of the bank. At about twelve o'clock the mast of one of the largest *gyassas*, an enormous pole nearly ninety feet long, fell with a resounding crash on the ground. Luckily no one obstructed it. Shouts of unpitied distress were whirled away with clothing and other articles by the fierce tempest. At length towards morning the storm abated, and we prepared to resume our voyage. But the damage was considerable. Besides the dismasted boat two others had sunk near the shore, swamped by the waves; one was stranded on a sandbank, helpless and hopeless, higher up the stream; two had their rudders smashed, and one, the one containing all the regimental trophies—flags, spears, shields, a piece of cannon—had foundered in mid-stream and was irretrievably lost. Nobody was, however, drowned or injured; so that there was much to be thankful for. But it was hard to believe that the river which had caressed us so tenderly in the evening had behaved thus rudely when the lights were out.

It was necessary, first of all, to raise the two boats which had sunk in shallow water. A strong rope was fastened on to the bows and passed through a block at the masthead of a more fortunate consort. To the end of this rope the muscular energy of a company of stalwart Guardsmen was then applied. I watched the mast anxiously. It bent. For a moment it seemed that it would break, and that we should have only

thrown good *gyassas* after bad. Then the sunken hull began to move, and in a moment the rim of its bulwarks appeared above the waters. As soon as the water inside was thus cut off from the water of the river, half a dozen men, black and white, jumped into the swamped boat, naked and shivering in the grey of the morning, and began to bale with tin biscuit-boxes. Meanwhile the sunken *gyassa* was kept at the surface by the tackle fastened on to our mast. (I write 'our' because Lieutenant Crichton's[2] *gyassa*, in which I had the pleasure to voyage, was the one entrusted with these salvage operations.) For some time the baling operations appeared to produce little result other than splashing and rough chaff, but gradually the level of the water inside the boat began to sink below that of the river and the strain on our mast lessened. Presently the wreck began to float of its own buoyancy. At length our assistance became superfluous. Finally all the water was baled out, and the half-company whose clothes and stores were thus rescued were invited to get on board again, take possession of their effects—a little damped—and try again the hazards of water transport.

Two or three hours of wind and current brought us to Royan island. We ought to have reached this place the night before, and should have done so but for the gale. Colonel Hatton[3] and the leading boat had indeed accomplished the passage, and had continued on through the Shabluka Cataract. The rest of the

[2] Lieut. H. Crichton, Grenadier Guards.
[3] Colonel V. Hatton, Grenadier Guards.

fleet tied up for an hour or so to breakfast and to dry their clothes.

Royan island was the advanced depôt of the army at Omdurman. Besides the stores, there was considerable hospital accommodation. Rows of big square tents—'E.P.[4] tents,' as they are called in India—had been set up near the palm-trees by the bank. The Red Cross flag was conspicuous. There were a good many sick. I inquired the local death rate. 'Average about two deaths a day,' was the answer. Another cemetery was growing by the banks of the Nile. More British soldiers were being 'sunk in Egyptians.' I thought of Rudyard Kipling, and realised that what is true of the ocean may also be applied to the Nile.

> If blood be the price of Admiralty,
> Lord God, we ha' paid it in.

Our *gyassa* was among the first to arrive. I watched the landing of the next. It was a difficult and delicate operation. The great boat came down stream with wind and current helping her, and making perhaps ten miles an hour. Suddenly her helm went over and she headed for the bank. It looked as if a mighty crash impended, but the mud acted as a buffer. There was a padded shock. Two natives sprang out with a rope; twenty Grenadiers laid hold of it. The boat, caught by the force of the river, was swirled off into midstream again. The strain grew. Gradually the pulling men triumphed, and the vessel was drawn into shore and moored securely. So it was with all the others.

[4] European privates.

After a short halt on the island the Guards re-embarked in their boats, the lashings were cast off, and the whole fleet started down the rapids of Shabluka. The *gyassas* accomplished the passage of this cataract without misfortune, but not without adventure. At times we grazed a sharp and dangerous rock by a few yards; at others the swirl of the river swept the boat into the bushes of the bank. Once for nearly an hour we circled aimlessly in a whirlpool, enduring —not in silence—the taunts of the more fortunate voyagers who passed swiftly by in great elation. Time brought its revenges, and we enjoyed the satisfaction of seeing them only a little later caught in an eddy and carried far up the gorge. At length the walls of rock on either side receded, the green strip by the banks widened, and the river emerged again into the plain.

After the passage of the Shabluka we drifted uneventfully with the stream. The camp of the 21st Lancers was passed on the morning of the third day. They were still on their long march back to the Atbara. Six hours later Metemma came in sight, and with the evening the boats tied up at the palm grove of Magyriah, where we had halted for a day on our march up with the cavalry convoy.

I will not drag the account through all the voyage —for the weather was oppressively hot, and the sun beat down on the scanty coverings which the soldiers might improvise from blankets and waterproof sheets. Yet pleasant memories remain. During the fiercest heat of the day we crouched beneath the precious

Soudan umbrellas and longed for evening; but when the hours had passed and the sun had lost its power, the coolness of the air and the beauty of the scene made amends for all. The soldiers were impressed with the splendour and majesty of the great river. All marvelled at the sunsets. Human art needs cultivated admirers. The beauty of Nature appeals to the plainest intelligence, stirs the dullest brain. The wonderful flame pictures baffle memory and are beyond recall. But one impression may be recorded. The sun has just gone down; the river shrouds itself in light mist and gathering darkness; the palm-trees and foliage on the banks are fading into black. On the dull yellow of the western sky a high range of serrated hills is painted in indigo. Drifting with the swift stream and helped by the evening breeze, the odd-shaped boats pass one by one, topped by their enormous sails and loaded with brown-clad men, while perhaps there floats across the flood-waters the catch of some song which the soldiers have learnt in London.

To the attractions of the scenery were added those of agreeable companionship. The courtesy of the officers of the Grenadiers is no less marked than the discipline of their men. A good many stupid taunts have been made in the newspapers at the expense of this battalion, and although I do not intend to be drawn into the ancient controversy between Guard and Line, yet it is desirable to correct erroneous statements. The officers of the first battalion of the Grenadier Guards lived in the last campaign neither better nor worse than the officers of any other British regiment.

The soldiers worked, endured, and risked neither more nor less than any other unit in the 2nd British Brigade. What the Guards lost in the extreme youth of their rank and file they gained in their superior class and in their Non-commissioned Officers. The 1st British Brigade were in the Soudan six months longer than their comrades, and took part in the action on the Atbara. They might therefore pose as veterans to the later reinforcements. But if they were stimulated by the reputation they had won, the new brigade was inspired by that they had yet to win, and spurred by the intention not to be patronised. The impartial observer could perceive no difference between the two brigades; and discretion as well as politeness forbids comparisons of their battalions. The Grenadiers on their return to England received a warm welcome. But since they were the only troops to come back home while the public mind was filled with the war, it is not wonderful that they were acclaimed as the representatives of the victorious army. Because they were the recipients of honour, they became the objects of envy and, I fear, of hatred and malice too. It is therefore desirable to state that of the eight battalions of British troops engaged in the campaign of 1898, the 1st Grenadier Guards was one of the best, yet not quite the best.

At daylight on the fifth day we reached the confluence of the Atbara and the Nile, and landing camped again on familiar ground. It had been intended to send every battalion by halves across the desert railway and so down the line of communications, on

the two days following its arrival at the Atbara, but the interest of the world had moved from the Soudan to Crete, and the interests of the Empire demanded that part of its ubiquitous army should move too. On the 2nd of September the second battalion of the Rifle Brigade were engaged in destroying the Dervishes. On the 9th of September they received orders to go to Crete. On the 23rd they were pacifying the Cretans, and hanging those who objected to the pacification. To accomplish this rapid journey it was necessary that they should take precedence of all other troops, and we accordingly waited three days at the Atbara, while their baggage and their Maxim guns were packed into trains and hurried northwards on other urgent Imperial business.

The camp and entrenchment were no longer the busy town of a month before. The Grenadiers were the only battalion under canvas. All the gunboats had gone south. All the steamers were moving troops. 'Harmony Row' was deserted. Business was slack in the bazaar. Only the hospitals were full as ever. The high winds whirled the dust in all directions and did not modify the heat of the sun. Everyone was anxious to be gone. Nor were we sorry when the troop trains waited and we prepared again for the passage of the desert. The reader is familiar with the railway. He has watched it from its earliest beginnings. He knows the subaltern director and the subaltern traffic managers. He will, therefore, understand why they smiled at our Munchausen tales of perils and hardships at the front, and how, still smiling, they bundled

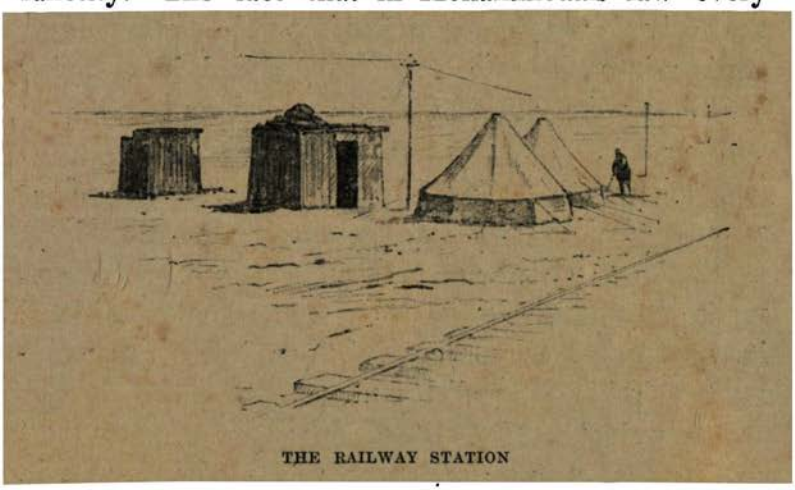
enthusiasm, valour, and discipline homewards to glory with convenient despatch.

Only one incident occurred to diversify the journey and mar the perfection of the railway arrangements. It will be remembered that though the British officers on the railway never failed, the British engines sometimes did. The men were made of better stuff than the machines; they stood a greater strain. The incident occurred at 'No. 6' station; and since any event in the desert is rare, remarkable, and sometimes welcome, I will set it down.

The engine, which had been working more jerkily every minute of the preceding hour, stopped with an ominous and alarming suddenness. Everyone got out. Something was wrong. The awful thought that we might perhaps have to wait some twenty hours or so at this attractive spot arose in many minds. Then the worst was known. The engine had broken down. It was in a thoroughly bad condition. Hard work had worn it out. I will not commit myself to technical language. It appeared that everything was loose. The native engine-driver was appalled and perfectly helpless. It would not work and go forward, he said; whereas before, it had worked and gone forward. Undoubtedly there was an accident. But who should say Allah had not some wise purpose? There would not be much delay. Another engine might come, perhaps to-morrow—this last hopefully. And we were all going home!

How dreadful are the curses which Mohammedanism lays on its votaries! Besides the fanatical

frenzy, which is as dangerous in a man as hydrophobia in a dog, there is this fearful fatalistic apathy. The effects are apparent in many countries. Improvident habits, slovenly systems of agriculture, sluggish methods of commerce, and insecurity of property exist wherever the followers of the Prophet rule or live. A degraded sensualism deprives this life of its grace and refinement; the next of its dignity and sanctity. The fact that in Mohammedan law every



THE RAILWAY STATION

woman must *belong* to some man as his absolute property—either as a child, a wife, or a concubine—must delay the final extinction of slavery until the faith of Islam has ceased to be a great power among men. Individual Moslems may show splendid qualities. Thousands become the brave and loyal soldiers of the Queen: all know how to die: but the influence of the religion paralyses the social developement of those who follow it. No stronger retrograde force exists in the world. Far from being moribund, Mohammedanism is

a militant and proselytising faith. It has already spread throughout Central Africa, raising fearless warriors at every step; and were it not that Christianity is sheltered in the strong arms of science—the science against which it had vainly struggled—the civilisation of modern Europe might fall, as fell the civilisation of ancient Rome.

To return to No. 6. The versatility of a British officer saved us a most unwelcome delay. Lieutenant Bathurst[5] proceeded to the locomotive, stimulated the driver's energy, patched up the engine, and, getting into the cab himself, succeeded in 'coaxing her' along the odd 200 miles that separated us from Wady Halfa. It appeared that he had made a practice in England of driving engines, and was most fully acquainted with all the details of the work. When I reflect on the delightful aspect of No. 6 station, and realise how much longer we might have contemplated its beauties, I cannot control my admiration of this most desirable accomplishment.

On arrival at Halfa the troops were at once placed on board a steamer which was in readiness, and in two hours from the time of arrival were speeding down the river. On the way up, the journey from Shellal to Halfa took five days; going down, it occupied but one. The difference was due to the Nile, whose current may be said to count two votes on a division. At Shellal the Grenadier Guards were delayed for some hours pending the arrival of troop trains. With several officers I had myself rowed across the river, and examined the Temple of Philæ. I fear lest, in writing

[5] Lieut. F. Bathurst, Grenadier Guards.

that I was prepared to see the temple for ever submerged that Egypt might become more prosperous, I may have exposed myself to a charge of Vandalism. It is certainly a very beautiful and interesting ruin. Yet I cannot alter my opinion. Surely if a small model were made, the archæologists might be content. We might also erect a pillar, overlooking the waters beneath which the Temple would lie, with an inscription in a classic tongue: 'Here stood the Temple of Philæ, sacrificed in 1899 to the welfare of the world.'

I bade farewell to the Nile at Shellal—a most unnecessary proceeding. Before the train had journeyed for an hour the eternal river reappeared among the palm-trees, and presently the line passed along an embankment lapped on all sides by the flood-waters. Few more extraordinary spectacles can be seen by the tourist, or even by the traveller, than that which submerged Egypt presents. On every side a vast sheet of water, dotted with village-covered islands, stretches away to the distant mountain boundaries of the Nile Valley. Right through the broadest part of this great expanse and for several hundred miles the railway runs along its low, narrow embankment—a turnpike road across an ocean. Yet all these spreading waters are the waters of the Nile, and it is not until the lighthouse tower of Alexandria has sunk below the horizon, that the traveller may properly say good-bye to the river of the River War. Nor can he carry away a truer conception of the land he has left than is expressed by Lord Rosebery's celebrated saying: 'The Nile is Egypt, and Egypt is the Nile.'

CHAPTER XXIII

ON THE BLUE NILE

Anti-climax—General Hunter's expedition—Its reception—Musa Digna—Posts on the Blue Nile—Ahmed Fedil—The Kassala column—Seven men—Passage of the Atbara—Skirmish at Mugatta—Action of Gedaref—The saddleback—The attack on the transport—Captain Ruthven, V.C.—The 16th Egyptian battalion—Flight of the enemy—Nur Angara—The defence of Gedaref—Return of Ahmed Fedil—The blockade—The relief expedition—Retreat of Ahmed Fedil—Colonel Parsons's operations—Colonel Lewis's expedition—The Ghezira—Fever—The Sheikh Bakr—Rosaires—Ahmed's intentions—Arrival of reinforcements—The march to Dakhila—Action of Rosaires—The position—The fords—The deployment—The advance of the Xth Soudanese—The counter-attack—Capture of the island—Surrender of the Dervishes—The end of Saadalla—Captain Fergusson—The withdrawal of the wounded—Results and losses—The Xth Soudanese—The fugitive in Kordofan—At the tomb of his ancestor—Memories of victory and defeat—The Kordofan Field Force—The water problem—The Shirkela Reconnaissance—The start from Kohi—Strength of the column—The journey—A miserable land—A welcome pool—A silent town—The Khalifa at bay—Colonel Kitchener's decision—The return to the Nile—Some horrible spectacles—The end of the River War.

THE authority of the Khalifa and the strength of his army were for ever broken on the 2nd of September, and the battle of Omdurman is the natural climax of this tale of war. To those who fought, and still more to those who fell, in the subsequent actions the climax came somewhat later. After the victory the public interest was no longer centred in the Soudan. The

last British battalion had been carried north of Assuan; the last Press correspondent had hurried back to Cairo or London. But the military operations were by no means over.

The enemy had been defeated. It remained to reconquer the territory. The Dervish provincial garrisons still preserved their allegiance to the Khalifa. Several strong Arab forces kept the field. Distant Kordofan and even more distant Darfur were as yet quite unaffected by the great battle at the confluence of the Niles. There were rumours of Europeans in the Far South.

The unquestioned command of the waterways which the Sirdar enjoyed enabled the greater part of the Egyptian Soudan to be at once formally reoccupied. All towns or stations on the main rivers and their tributaries were at the mercy of the gunboats. It was only necessary to send troops to occupy them and to hoist the British and Egyptian flags. Two expeditions were forthwith despatched up the White and Blue Niles to establish garrisons, and as far as possible to subdue the country. The first, under the personal command of the Sirdar, left Omdurman on the 8th of September, and steamed up the White Nile towards Fashoda. Of the events that followed that momentous journey some account will be found in another chapter. The second expedition consisted of the gunboats *Sheikh* and *Hafir*, together with two companies and the brass band of the Xth Soudanese and a Maxim battery, all under the command of General Hunter. Leaving Omdurman on the 19th of September, they started

up the Blue Nile to Abu Haraz.* The rest of the Xth battalion followed as soon as other steamers were set free from the business of taking the British division to the Atbara and bringing supplies to Omdurman. The progress of the expedition up the river resembled a triumphal procession. The people of the riparian villages assembled on the banks, and partly from satisfaction at being relieved from the oppression of the Khalifa and the scourge of war, partly from fear, and partly from wonder, gave vent to loud and long-continued cheers. As the gunboats advanced the inhabitants escorted them along the bank, the men dancing and waving their swords, and the women uttering shrill cries of welcome. The reception of the expedition when places of importance were passed and the crowd amounted to several thousands is described as very stirring, and we are told, such was the enthusiasm of the natives, that they even broke up their houses to supply the gunboats with wood for fuel. Whether this be true or not I cannot tell, but it is in any case certain that the vessels were duly supplied, and that the expedition in its progress was well received by the negroid tribes, who had long resented the tyranny of the Arabs.

On the 22nd of September a considerable part of the army of Osman Digna, which had not been present at the battle of Omdurman, was found encamped on the Ghezira, a few miles north of Rufaa. The Sheikhs and Emirs, on being summoned by General Hunter, surrendered, and a force of about 2,000 men laid down

* Map, 'The Campaign on the Blue Nile,' page 285.

their arms. Musa Digna, a nephew of Osman and the commander of his forces, was put in irons and held prisoner. The rest, who were mostly from the Suakin district, were given a safe-conduct, and told to return to their homes—an order they lost no time in obeying.

The next day the General arrived at Wad Medina, where the Dervish garrison—1,000 strong—had already surrendered to the gunboat *Sheikh*. These men, who were regular Dervishes, were transported in sailing-boats to Omdurman, and augmented the number of prisoners of war already collected. On the 29th of September General Hunter reached Rosaires, 400 miles south of Khartoum, and the extreme limit of steam navigation on the Blue Nile. By the 3rd of October he had established garrisons of the Xth Soudanese in Rosaires, at Karkoj, at Senaar (the old seat of the Government of the province), and at Wad Medina. Having also arranged for gunboat patrolling, he returned to Omdurman.

But there was one Dervish force which had no intention of surrendering to the invaders, and whose dispersal was not accomplished until three fierce and critical actions had been fought. Ahmed Fedil, a zealous and devoted adherent of the Khalifa, had been sent after the defeat on the Atbara to collect all the Dervishes who could be spared from the Gedaref and Gallabat provinces, and bring them to join the growing army at Omdurman. The Emir had faithfully discharged his duty, and he was hurrying to his master's assistance with a strong and well-disciplined force of not less than 8,000 men when, while yet sixty miles

from the city, he received the news of 'the stricken field.' He immediately halted, and sought to hide the disaster from his soldiers by announcing that the Khalifa had been victorious and no longer needed their assistance. He even explained the appearance of gunboats upon the river by saying that these had run past the batteries at Omdurman and that the others were destroyed. The truth was not, however, long concealed; for a few days later two emissaries despatched by Slatin arrived at the Dervish camp and announced the destruction of the Omdurman army, the flight of the Khalifa, and the fall of the city. The messengers were authorised to offer Ahmed terms; but that implacable Dervish flew into a rage, and, having shot one, sent the other, covered with insults and stripes, to tell the 'Turks' that he would fight to the bitter end. He then struck his camp, and marched back along the east bank of the Blue Nile, with the intention of crossing the river near its confluence with the Rahad, and so joining the Khalifa in Kordofan. His Dervishes, however, did not view this project with satisfaction. Their families and women had been left with large stores of grain and ammunition in Gedaref, under a strong garrison of 3,000 men. They urged their commander to return and collect these possessions. Ahmed at first refused, but when on arriving at the place of passage he found himself confronted with a gunboat, he resolved to make a virtue of necessity, and set out leisurely for Gedaref.

On the 5th of September Colonel Parsons, in command of the forces at Kassala, heard through the Italian

Governor of Eritrea of the victory at Omdurman. The next day official news arrived from England, and in conformity with previous instructions he set out on the 7th for Gedaref. It was known that Ahmed Fedil had marched towards Omdurman. It was believed that Gedaref was only weakly held, and the opportunity of cutting the most powerful remaining Dervish army from its base was too precious to be neglected. But the venture was desperate. The whole available strength of the Kassala garrison was mustered, and a column formed as follows:

450 men, 16th Egyptians, under CAPTAIN MCKERREL.[1]
450 men, 'Arab battalion' (formerly Italian levies), under CAPTAIN WILKINSON.[2]
370 Arab irregulars, under MAJOR LAWSON.[3]
80 camel-men of the Egyptian Slavery Department (Soudanese soldiers who had been discharged from the army for old age and medical unfitness), under CAPTAIN HON. H. RUTHVEN.[4]

With these 1,350 motley soldiers, untried, little disciplined, worn with waiting and wasted by disease, without cavalry, artillery, or machine-guns, and with only seven British officers, including the doctor, Gedaref was taken, and, having been taken, was held. The story of this reckless, disjointed enterprise, as glorious to those who carried it through as it was discreditable to those who ordered it, the heavy odds against success, the total annihilation involved by failure, and lastly the extraordinary luck which brushed aside all perils and

[1] Captain A. de S. McKerrel, Cameron Highlanders and Egyptian army.
[2] Captain E. B. Wilkinson, Lincoln Regiment and Egyptian army.
[3] Major H. M. Lawson, R.E. and Egyptian army.
[4] Captain Hon. H. Ruthven, 3rd Battalion Highland Light Infantry and Egyptian Slavery Department.

brought the seven Europeans to safety and honour, recall the voyage of the *Bolivar* across the Bay of Biscay, rather than the military operations of a powerful country.

After two long marches Colonel Parsons and his force arrived at El Fasher, on the right bank of the Atbara. Their advance, which had hitherto led them through a waterless desert, was now checked by a raging torrent. The river was in full flood, and a channel of deep water, broader than the Thames below London Bridge and racing along at seven miles an hour, formed a serious obstacle. Since there were no boats the soldiers began forthwith to construct rafts from barrels that had been brought for the purpose. As soon as the first of these was completed, it was sent on a trial trip. The result was not encouraging. The raft supported ten men, occupied five hours in the passage, was carried ten miles down stream, and came back for its second journey on the afternoon of the next day. It was evident that this means of transport was out of the question. The only chance of success—indeed, of safety—lay in the force reaching and taking Gedaref before the return of Ahmed Fedil.

All depended upon speed; yet here was a hopeless delay. After prolonged discussion it was resolved to act on the suggestion of an Egyptian officer and endeavour to build boats. The work proved easier than was anticipated. The elastic wood of the mimosa scrub supplied the frames; some tarpaulins—fortunately available—formed the outer covering. The Egyptian soldiers, who delighted in the work, succeeded in making daily from such materials one boat capable

of carrying two tons; and in these ingenious contrivances the whole force crossed to the further bank. The camels, mules, and horses of the Transport—their heads supported with inflated water-skins tied under their jowls—were made to swim across the river by the local Shukrieh Arabs. Such was the skill of these tribesmen that only one camel and one mule were drowned during the operation. The passage was completed on the 16th, and the next day the advance was resumed along the west bank of the Atbara. At midday on the 18th Mugatta was reached, and here during the afternoon the Dervishes first learned, to their intense astonishment, that the 'Turks' had crossed the river.

The soldiers were cooking and sleeping after the march when, at five o'clock, heavy firing was suddenly heard from the outpost line of Arab irregulars which had been established on a ridge a mile to the west of the bivouac. Forty Dervish foot and a few horsemen had been sent from Gedaref to patrol the bank of the Atbara. After a long day's journey they were making their way to the river to drink, when they stumbled into the outposts. A confused skirmish followed. Both sides fired wildly, and the Dervishes retreated, leaving three killed on the ground and seven being made prisoners. The Arab irregulars lost two men killed and one severely wounded.

The reports of the prisoners were vague and uncertain, and no reliable information as to the strength of the garrison of Gedaref was obtainable. After a council of war it was, however, resolved to push on. Accordingly at dawn on the 20th the little force—having filled

their water-skins, tightened their belts, and invoked the assistance of the various gods they worshipped—started off, and marched all day in single file through the thick bush which lies between the Atbara and Gedaref. Towards evening the country became more open, and Ruthven's decrepit camel-men were able to some extent to reconnoitre the line of advance. The column camped for the night in a square, and was undisturbed. The march was continued with the first light on the 21st, and at six o'clock the camel-men came in contact with the Dervish scouts, who fell back after exchanging shots. Two hours later the village of Wad Akabu was reached, and as this was thought to be held by the enemy the whole force deployed and advanced in attack formation. The village was, however, deserted, save by such inhabitants as were too old to run away. These upon being questioned gave full and false information as to the Gedaref garrison. The Dervishes, they declared, did not want to fight. Their numbers were few, and the Emir Saadalla, who commanded, could scarcely muster 200 rifles and 600 spearmen. He had, moreover, received orders from Ahmed Fedil to surrender. Reassured by this intelligence, and having posted sentries, the column retired to rest peacefully during the night of the 21st, although within twelve miles of Gedaref. But at midnight very different news arrived. A deserter from the Dervishes made his way into the camp and informed Colonel Parsons that the Emir Saadalla awaited him with 3,500 men two miles before the town. The situation was grave. A retreat through the broken country and thick bush in

the face of a powerful and triumphant enemy seemed impossible. There was no alternative but to attack.

Very early on the morning of the 22nd—the same day on which General Hunter on the Blue Nile was compelling Musa Digna and his followers to surrender—Colonel Parsons and the Kassala column set forth to march into Gedaref and to fight whatever force it might contain. For the first two hours the road lay through *doura* [5] plantations and high grass which rose above the heads even of men mounted on camels; but as the town was approached, the *doura* ceased, and the troops emerged from the jungle on to an undulating moorland with occasional patches of rushes and withered grass. They continued to move steadily forward, their front covered as far as possible by the camel-men, whose enfeebled bodies Ruthven had inspired with something of his own daring and enthusiasm. At half-past seven and about three miles from Gedaref the enemy's scouts were encountered. A few shots were fired. The soldiers pressed their march, and at eight o'clock had reached a small knoll, from the top of which an extensive view was obtainable. The column halted, and Colonel Parsons and his officers ascended the eminence to reconnoitre.

A most menacing spectacle confronted them. Scarcely a mile away a strong force of Dervishes was rapidly advancing to meet the invaders. Four lines of white figures rising out of the grass showed by their length the number, and by their regularity the discipline,

* Map, 'The Action near Gedaref,' to face page 266.

[5] *Doura*: spelt also *dhurra*.

of the enemy. The officers computed the strength of their antagonists at not less than 4,000. Subsequent investigation has shown that the Emir Saadalla marched out of Gedaref with 1,700 riflemen, 1,600 spearmen, and 300 horse.

The swiftness of the Dervish advance and the short space that intervened between the forces made it evident that a collision would take place within half an hour. The valley was rocky, and overgrown with grass and reeds; but to the right of the track there rose a high saddleback hill, the surface of which looked more open, and which appeared to command the approaches from Gedaref. The troops knew nothing of the country; the Dervishes understood it thoroughly. The high ground gave at least advantage of view. Colonel Parsons resolved to occupy it. Time was, however, very scanty.

The order was given, and the column began to double across the valley towards the saddleback. The Dervishes, perceiving the nature of the movement, hurried their advance in the hope of catching the troops on the move and perhaps of even seizing the hill itself. But they were too late. Colonel Parsons and his force reached the saddleback safely, and with a few minutes to spare climbed up and advanced along it in column in the direction of Gedaref—the Arab battalion leading, the 16th Egyptians next, and last of all the irregulars, who were divided into two bodies, under their Arab chiefs Banda and Ramleh, and who guarded the hospital and baggage convoy.

The Dervishes, seeing that the troops had already

reached the hill and were moving along it towards the town, swung to their left and advanced to the attack. Thereupon at half-past eight the column wheeled into line to meet them, and standing in the long grass, which even on the summit of the hill was nearly breast-high, opened a heavy and destructive fire. The enemy, although suffering severe loss, continued to struggle bravely onward, replying vigorously to the musketry of the soldiers. At nine o'clock, while the frontal attack was still undecided, Colonel Parsons became aware that a strong force of Dervishes had moved round the left rear and were about to attack the hospital and transport. He at once sent to warn Captain Fleming, R.A.M.C.,[6] who combined the duties of medical officer and commander of the baggage column, of the impending assault, and directed him to close up the camels and meet it. The Arab Sheikhs, who in the absence of officers were acting as orderlies, had scarcely brought the news to Fleming, when the Dervish attack developed. The enemy, some 300 strong, rushed with great determination upon the baggage, and the escort of 120 Arab irregulars under the chief Ramleh at once broke and fled. The situation became desperate; but Ruthven with thirty-four Slavery Department camel-men—a Militia officer in command of broken-down soldiers—hastened to meet the exultant enemy and protect the baggage column with unequal numbers, but unequalled courage. Captain Fleming, the doctor, nobly assisted him; and these two, animating the Soudanese, defended themselves and the transport stubbornly. In spite of

[6] Captain C. C. Fleming, R.A.M.C.

all their efforts the rear of the baggage column was broken and cut up. The survivors escaped along the saddleback. The British officers, with their small following, fell back towards their main body, hotly pressed by the enemy.

At this moment Captain Ruthven observed one of his native officers, lying wounded on the ground, about to fall into the hands of the Dervishes and perish miserably. He immediately went back and, being a man of great physical strength, carried the body off in his arms. The enemy were, however, so close that he was three times compelled to set his burden down and defend himself with his revolver. Meanwhile the retirement towards the main body continued and accelerated.

Colonel Parsons and his force were now between two fires. The frontal attack was within 200 yards. The rear attack, flushed with success, were hurrying impetuously forward. The defeat and consequent total destruction of the Kassala column appeared certain. But in the nick of time the Dervish frontal attack, which had been suffering heavily from the fire of the troops, wavered; and when the Arab battalion and the 16th Egyptians advanced upon them to complete their discomfiture, they broke and fled. Colonel Parsons at once endeavoured to meet the rear attack. The Arab battalion, whose valour was more admirable than their discipline, continued to pursue the beaten enemy down the hill; but the 16th Egyptians, on being called upon by their commanding officer Captain McKerrel, faced steadily about and turned to encounter the fresh attack.

The heavy fire of the regular battalion checked the Dervish advance, and Captain Fleming, the rest of the dismounted camel-men, and Ruthven, still carrying his native officer,[7] found safety in their ranks. A short fierce musketry combat followed at the range of less than a hundred yards, at the end of which the assailants of the baggage convoy were completely repulsed. The action was now practically over and success was won. The Arab battalion, and those of the irregulars that had rallied, advanced and drove the enemy before them towards Gedaref, until at ten o'clock, both their front and rear attacks having failed, the Dervishes abandoned all resistance and a general rout ensued. No cavalry or artillery being available, further pursuit was impossible.

The town of Gedaref surrendered at noon. The Dervish Emir, Nur Angara, who with 200 black riflemen and two brass guns had been left in command of the garrison, made haste to submit. Although he filled no important office, he was in many ways a notable personage. He had long been regarded with suspicion by the Khalifa, and he now justified his sovereign's doubts, for without the slightest compunction he declared his detestation of Mahdism and vowed allegiance to the Government. Accordingly, without further unpleasantness, friendly relations were established between him and the Kassala troops; and while his knowledge assisted the councils, his black soldiers enlarged the forces of their recent enemies. The remainder of the Dervishes, continuing their flight under

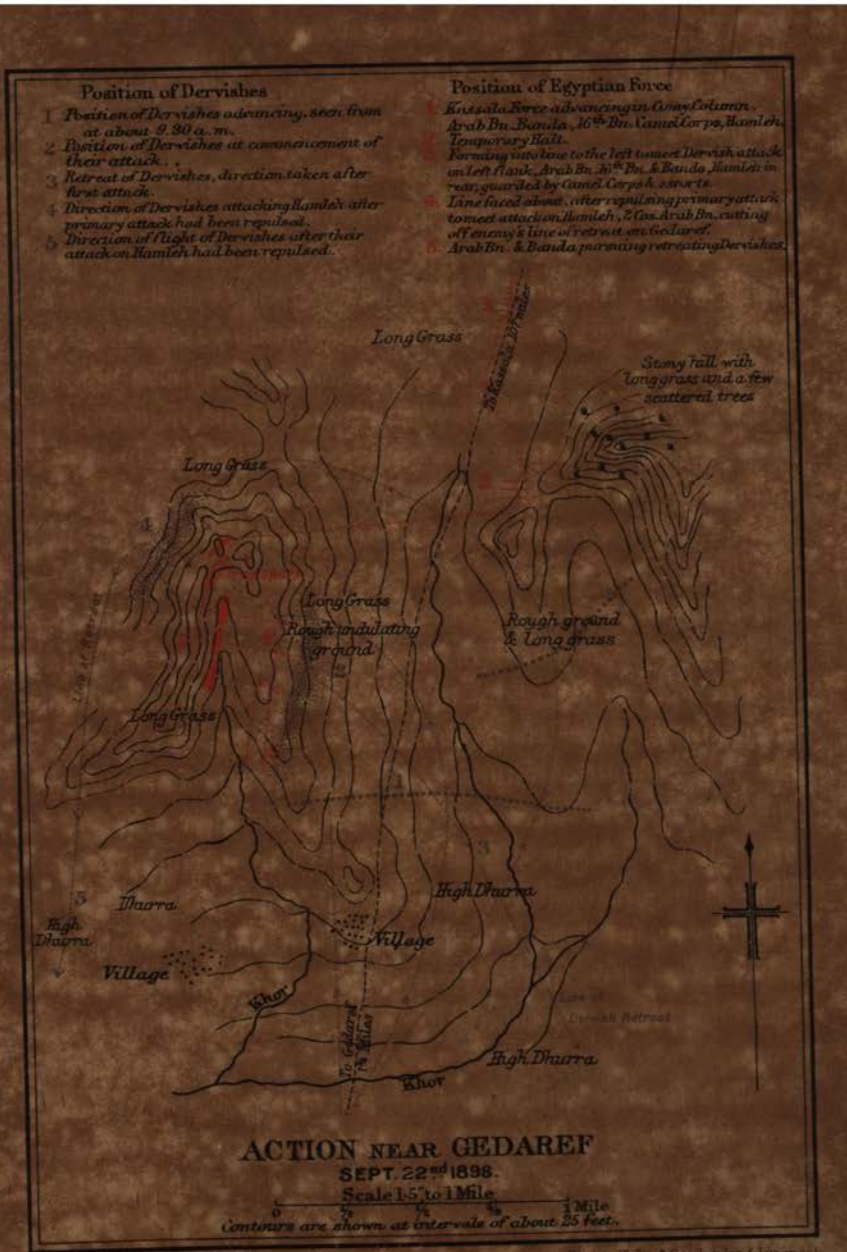
[7] For his gallantry on this occasion Captain Ruthven has since received the Victoria Cross.

the Emir Saadalla, hurried to tell the tale of defeat to Ahmed Fedil.

The action of Gedaref is from several causes an interesting military event. Throughout the short, but fierce and critical fight the movements on either side were quick and skilful. Colonel Parsons's dash for the vantage ground of the saddleback matches the cunning turning movement of the Emir Saadalla. The independent promptness of Ruthven in meeting the rear attack was proportionate to his personal gallantry, and a commission in the regular army was no less deserved than the decoration of the Victoria Cross. Lastly, the discipline and firmness of the 16th Egyptians were remarkable; and this battalion—which, the reader will remember, was only raised from reservists and recruits in 1896—may justly claim to have won greater distinction than any *fellahin* troops during the war.

The casualties suffered by the Kassala column in the action were severe in proportion to their numbers and the duration of the fight. The seven British officers escaped untouched; but of the 1,400 soldiers and irregulars engaged, 51 were killed and 80 wounded —a total of 131, or nearly ten per cent. The Dervishes left 500 dead on the field, including four Emirs of rank.

The victory had been won, the enemy were routed, the town was taken: it had now to be defended. Colonel Parsons took possession of the principal buildings, and began immediately to put them in a state of defence. This was fortunately an easy matter. The position was good and adaptable. It consisted of


Position of Dervishes
1. Position of Dervishes advancing, seen from at about 9.30 a.m.
2. Position of Dervishes at commencement of their attack.
3. Retreat of Dervishes, direction taken after first attack.
4. Direction of Dervishes attacking Hamleh after primary attack had been repulsed.
5. Direction of flight of Dervishes after their attack on Hamleh had been repulsed.
Position of Egyptian Force
1. Kassala Force advancing in Army Column.
2. Arab Bn. & Bande, 16th Bn. Camel Corps, Hamleh.
3. Temporary Halt.
4. Forming into line to the left to meet Dervish attack on left flank, Arab Bn. 16th Bn. & Bande, Hamleh in rear, guarded by Camel Corps & 2 Screws.
5. Line faced about, after repulsing primary attack to meet attack on Hamleh, 2 Cos. Arab Bn. cutting off enemy's line of retreat on Gedaref.
6. Arab Bn. & Bande pursuing retreating Dervishes.
Long Grass
Stony hill with long grass and a few scattered trees
Long Grass
Long Grass
Rough undulating ground
Rough ground & Long grass
Long Grass
High Dhurra
Dhurra
High Dhurra
Village
Village
Khor
To Gedaref 7½ Miles
High Dhurra
Khor
ACTION NEAR GEDAREF
SEPT. 22nd 1898.
Scale 1.5" to 1 Mile
0 ¼ ½ ¾ 1 Mile
Contours are shown at intervals of about 25 feet.

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three large enclosures, capable of holding the entire force, situated in échelon, so as to protect each other by their fire, and with strong brick walls six feet high. The approaches, however, were encumbered with *doura* plantations, scattered huts, and shelters; and the first task of the new garrison was to clear the ground, so that no cover might assist an enemy. The troops were established in the enclosures—the 16th battalion and the camel-men in the western (which was also largest), the irregulars in the centre, and the Arab battalion on the eastern side. All were at once set to work to cut down the *doura*, to level the mud houses without, and to build ramparts or banquettes within the walls. The three enclosures thus became three forts, and in the principal work the two captured brass guns were mounted, in small bastions thrown out from the north and west corners. While the infantry were thus engaged, Ruthven and his camel-men made daily reconnaissance of the surrounding country, and eagerly looked for the first appearance of Ahmed Fedil.

There was, however, one serious cause for anxiety. A great quantity of ammunition (of which there were unfortunately three kinds—Martini, Remington, and Vetterli) had been expended in the action; the reserve of cartridges lay in a small post which had been formed at Mugatta. Colonel Parsons decided to try and bring this into the town before the expected attack, and with this intent he set out from Gedaref on the 24th. On the same day Ahmed Fedil, who was loitering near Abu Haraz, received the news that his base of supplies had

* Map, 'The Attack on Gedaref,' to face page 270.

been captured, that his garrison had been beaten, and that the 'Turks' had taken Gedaref. The infuriated Emir, roused to immediate action and resolved to make a desperate effort to retake the town, started at once with his whole force, which after allowing for desertions still numbered at least 7,000 men.

The supplies of ammunition reached Gedaref on the afternoon of the 27th. At dawn the next day Ruthven reported that the advance guard of Ahmed Fedil was approaching the town. The attack began at half-past eight. The Dervishes, who fought with their customary gallantry, simultaneously assaulted the north, south, and west faces of the defences. Creeping forward through the high *doura*, they were able to get within 300 yards of the enclosures. But the intervening space had been carefully cleared of cover, and was swept by the musketry of the defenders. All attempts to cross this ground—even the most determined rushes—proved vain. While some made hopeless charges towards the walls, others crowded into a few straw shelters and mud huts which the troops had not found opportunity to remove, and thence maintained a ragged fire. After an hour's heavy fusillade the attack weakened, and presently ceased altogether. At ten o'clock, however, strong reinforcements having come up, the Dervishes made a second attempt. They were again repulsed, and at a quarter to eleven, after losing more than 500 men in killed and wounded, Ahmed Fedil admitted his defeat and retired to a clump of palm-trees two miles to the west of the town. The casualties among the defenders

were five men killed, one British officer, Captain Dwyer,[8] and thirteen men wounded.

The Dervishes remained for two days in the palm grove, and their leader repeatedly endeavoured to induce them to renew the attack. But although they closely surrounded the enclosures, and maintained a dropping fire, they refused to knock their heads against brick walls a third time; and on the 1st of October Ahmed Fedil was forced to retire to a more convenient camp eight miles to the southward. Here for the next three weeks he remained, savage and sulky; and the Kassala column were content to keep to their defences. A few convoys from Mugatta made their way into the forts under the cover of darkness, but for all practical purposes the blockade of the garrison was complete. Their losses in action had reduced their strength. They were not abundantly supplied with ammunition. The smell of the putrefying corpses which lay around the walls and in the *doura* crop, together with the unhealthy climate and the filth of the town, was the fertile source of disease. A painful and racking fever afflicted all ranks, and at one time as many as 270 of the 400 regular soldiers were prostrated. The recurring night alarms added to the fatigues of the troops and the anxieties of the seven officers. The situation was indeed so unsatisfactory that Colonel Parsons was compelled to ask for assistance.

Major-General Rundle, who in the Sirdar's absence held the chief command, immediately organised a relief

[8] Captain A. G. Dwyer, East Surrey Regiment and Egyptian army.

expedition. The IXth, XIIth, and half of the XIIIth Soudanese, with three companies of the Camel Corps, under Colonel Collinson, were at once despatched from Omdurman to the mouth of the Rahad river. The infantry were conveyed in steamers; the Camel Corps marched along the bank, completing the whole distance of 130 miles in fifty-six hours. The Blue Nile garrisons, with the exception of the post at Rosaires, were also concentrated. By the 8th of October the whole force was collected at Abu Haraz. Five hundred camels, which had marched from Omdurman, and every available local beast of burden joined the transport of the column. On the 9th the XIIth Soudanese started up the Rahad river for Ain el Owega. From this point the road leaves the river and strikes across the desert to Gedaref, a distance of 100 miles; and in the whole distance water is only found at the wells of El Kau. Owing to this scarcity of water it was necessary to carry a supply with the troops. The transport being insufficient to provide for the whole force, the march had to be made in two columns. The Camel Corps and the XIIth Soudanese, about 1,200 strong, set forth under Colonel Collinson from Ain el Owega on the 17th, and reached Gedaref safely on the 22nd. Warned of their arrival, Ahmed Fedil, having made a feeble night attack which was repulsed by the garrison with a loss to themselves of two Soudanese wounded, realised that he had now no chance of recapturing the town. Preparations were indeed made to attack him, but on the 23rd of October, when a reconnaissance was made in the direction of his camp, the Dervish force

Leslie Rundle

was seen moving off in a southerly direction, their retreat covered by a strong rearguard, which was intended to perform the double duty of protecting the retirement and preventing desertion. But though the Dervish Emir was still impenitent, his followers were greatly disheartened, and in spite of his precautions many petty chiefs, including Abu Bakr, a Darfur Sheikh, and 500 of his men, transferred their allegiance to the winning side, and were at once employed against their former comrades.

Meanwhile the rest of the relieving force had arrived at Ain el Owega, and awaited the return of the transport to march to Gedaref. But the retreat of Ahmed Fedil rendered this unnecessary, and they were therefore ordered back to Abu Haraz, and thence carried by the gunboats to re-establish the various posts on the Blue Nile.

The operations conducted by Colonel Parsons thus ended in complete success. Great difficulties were overcome, great perils were encountered, great results were obtained. But while we applaud the skill of the commander and the devotion of his subordinates, it is impossible not to criticise the rash and over-confident policy which sent such a weak and ill-equipped force on so hazardous an enterprise. The action of Gedaref, as has been shown, was, through no fault of the officers or men of the expedition, within an ace of being a disaster. But there were other critical occasions when only the extraordinary good fortune which attended the force, saved it from destruction. Firstly, the column was not discovered until it reached Mugatta;

secondly, it was not attacked in the thick bush; thirdly, the Dervishes gave battle in the open instead of remaining within their walls, whence the troops could not have driven them without artillery; and fourthly, the reserve ammunition arrived before the attack of Ahmed Fedil. Colonel Parsons, commenting on the operations, said:

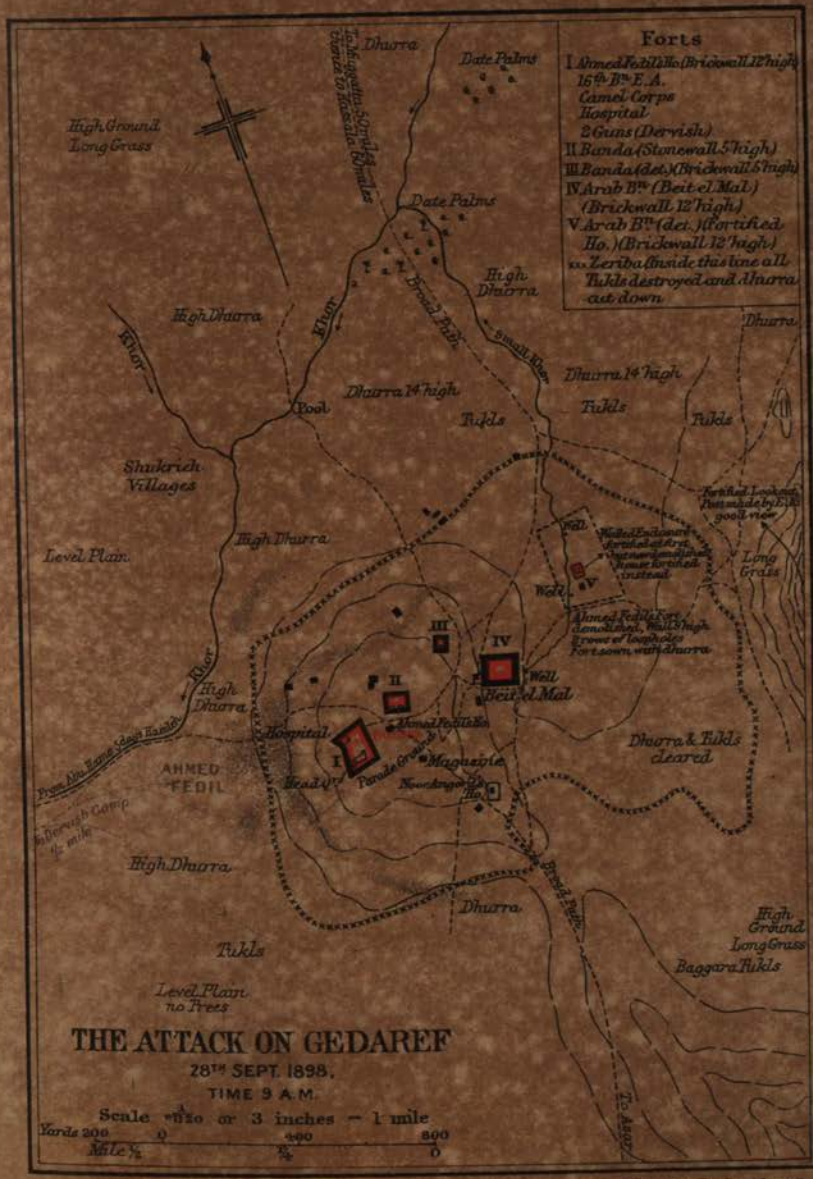
'According to the rules of warfare, the Kassala force ought not to have won; and so little did the non-fighting element of Kassala think of our chances of winning, that they on our departure migrated in numbers to the Italian colony for safety.[9]

The difficulty and hazards add to the excellence of the achievement, but, even in view of the fact that 'the expedition cost nothing whatever,'[10] it is evident that a grave responsibility attaches to Sir H. Kitchener for exposing the small force to unnecessary dangers, and for running the risk of a serious and most inopportune reverse.

After his defeat before Gedaref, Ahmed Fedil reverted to his intention of joining the Khalifa in Kordofan, and he withdrew southwards toward the Dinder river with a following that still numbered more than 5,000. To pass the Nile in the face of the gunboats appeared impossible. He did not, however, believe that steamers could navigate the higher reaches of the rivers, and in the hopes of finding a safe crossing-place he directed his march so as to strike the Blue

[9] Lecture delivered by Colonel (now Sir Charles) Parsons, R.A., at a meeting of the Royal Artillery Institution, Woolwich, April 20, 1899.

[10] *Ibid.*



THE ATTACK ON GEDAREF

28TH SEPT. 1898.

TIME 9 A.M.

Scale 1/120 or 3 inches = 1 mile

Yards 200 0 400 800

Mile ¼ ½ 0

George Philip & Son, Ltd., Ltd. & Liverpool

Longmans, Green & Co. London, New York & Bombay

Nile south of Karkoj. Moving leisurely, and with frequent delays to pillage the inhabitants, he arrived on the Dinder, twenty-five miles to the east of Karkoj, on the 7th of November. Here he halted to reconnoitre. He had trusted in the Karkoj-Rosaires reach being too shallow for the gunboats; but he found two powerful vessels already patrolling it. Again frustrated, he again turned southwards, meaning to cross above the Rosaires Cataract, which was without doubt impassable to steamers.

On the 22nd of October Colonel Lewis, with two companies of the Camel Corps and three squadrons of cavalry, started from Omdurman with the object of marching through the centre of the Ghezira and of re-establishing the Egyptian authority. His progress was in every way successful. The inhabitants were submissive, and resigned themselves with scarcely a regret to orderly government. Very little lawlessness had followed the defeat of the Khalifa, and whatever plundering there had been was chiefly the work of the disbanded irregulars who had fought at Omdurman under Major Wortley's command on the east bank of the Nile. In every village Sheikhs were appointed in the name of the Khedive, and the officers of the cavalry column concerned themselves with many difficult disputes about land, crops, and women—all of which they settled to their satisfaction. Marching through Awamra, Haloosen, and Mesalamia, Colonel Lewis reached Karkoj on the 7th of November, almost at the same time that Ahmed Fedil arrived on the Dinder.

On the next day Colonel Lewis, with Major Le

Gallais and a dozen troopers, made a daring attempt to reconnoitre the enemy's position. Starting at daybreak, they made their way through the dense jungle and forest which covers the land, and, although it was impossible to move faster than a walk, succeeded in approaching the Dervish camp. When so close that the beating of the drums could be heard, the patrol stumbled upon a strong Dervish outpost. The enemy fired, the alarm was given, and the officers and men were glad to ride for their lives along the narrow bush-paths. The Lancers were nearly pulled from their horses by the overhanging boughs. All had their faces lacerated by the thorns, but, in spite of many false turnings and unnecessary detours, they succeeded in escaping from the gloomy maze without actual loss, and even carried with them a prisoner. The reconnaissance proved two things: firstly, that cavalry and Camel Corps could do nothing in such a country; and secondly, that it was impossible to attack the Dervishes as long as they remained in the jungle. Colonel Lewis therefore determined to await events, and confined himself to patrolling the river assiduously with the gunboats.

For the next six weeks the movements of the two forces resembled a game of hide-and-seek. Ahmed Fedil, concealed in the dense forest and jungle of the east bank, raided the surrounding villages and worked his way gradually towards the Rosaires Cataract. Colonel Lewis, perplexed by false and vague information, remained halted at Karkoj, despatched vain reconnaissances in the hopes of obtaining reliable

news, revolved deep schemes to cut off the raiding parties, or patrolled the river in the gunboats. And meanwhile sickness fell upon his force. The malarial fever, which is everywhere prevalent on the Blue Nile in the autumn, was now at its height. More than thirty per cent. of every garrison and every post were affected. The company holding Rosaires was stricken to a man, and only the two British officers remained fit for duty. The cavalry force which had marched through the Ghezira suffered the most severely. One after another every British officer was stricken down and lay burning but helpless beneath the palm-leaf shelters or tottered on to the friendly steamers that bore the worst cases north. Of the 460 men who composed the force, 10 had died and 420 were reported unfit for duty within a month of their arrival at Karkoj. The horses of the three squadrons had to be ridden back to Wad Medina by men of the IXth Soudanese, while the broken-down troopers were carried in the steamers. All ranks suffered equally. Of the thirty British officers on the Blue Nile, two escaped the ravages of the sickness. One died,[11] many were invalided, and the efficiency of the whole force, and particularly of the Egyptians, was seriously impaired.

During the end of November the Sheikh Bakr, who had deserted the Dervishes after their retreat from Gedaref, arrived at Karkoj with 350 Irregulars. He claimed to have defeated his former chief many times, and produced a sack of heads as evidence of his

[11] Captain C. S. Cottingham, Manchester Regiment and Egyptian army.

success. His loyalty being thus placed beyond doubt, he was sent to keep contact with the Dervishes and encouraged to the greatest efforts by the permission to appropriate whatever spoils of war he could capture.

Meanwhile Ahmed Fedil was working his way slowly southward along a deep *khor* which runs almost parallel to the Blue Nile and is perhaps twenty miles from it. His raiding parties constantly attempted to harry the riparian villages, but were prevented from doing much damage by the vigilance of the gunboats. The scarcity of grain, which necessitated frequent halts for foraging, and the dense grass and jungle through which he was moving, retarded his progress; but on the 12th of December part of his force reached a point about eight miles east of Rosaires, south of which place they apparently intended to cross the Nile. Their arrival was soon proclaimed, for at dawn on the 13th about 200 Dervishes attacked the Rosaires post. The garrison of fifty fever-stricken men had fortunately been reinforced that very morning by 200 men of the Xth Soudanese with two Maxim guns, and the assailants were sharply repulsed.

As soon as the position of the Dervish Emir was definitely known, Colonel Lewis moved his force, which had been strengthened by detachments of the Xth Soudanese, from Karkoj to Rosaires. Here he remained for several days, with but little hope of obstructing the enemy's passage of the river. On the 20th of December, however, full—though, as was afterwards found, not very accurate—information was received

It was reported that on the 18th Ahmed Fedil had reached the village of Dakhila, about twenty miles south of the Rosaires post; that he himself had immediately crossed with his advance guard, and was busily passing the women and children across the river on rafts. It was also said that the Dervish commander did not intend to strike westward towards the White Nile, but was resolved to march down the west bank towards Karkoj, collecting supplies and harassing the tribes who had made their submission to the Government. As this would have unsettled the whole of the recently pacified Ghezira, and might even have raised a fresh outbreak, Colonel Lewis felt bound, in spite of his numerical inferiority, and in spite of the fact that Dakhila was beyond the limits of the district in which he had been ordered to operate, to attack the enemy while they were still divided by the river.

On the 22nd therefore he despatched the Sheikh Bakr up the west bank to cut off their flocks and generally annoy the Dervishes who had already crossed the river. The irregulars accordingly departed; and the next day news was brought that the Dervish force was almost equally divided by the Blue Nile, half being on one bank and half on the other. At midday on the 24th the gunboats *Melik* and *Dal* arrived from Omdurman with a detachment of 200 more men of the Xth Soudanese under Major Fergusson,[12] and 30 men of the IXth Soudanese under Captain Sir Henry Hill.[13] With

[12] Major C. Fergusson, Grenadier Guards and Egyptian army.

[13] Capt. Sir H. B. Hill, Bart., Royal Irish Fusileers and Egyptian army.

this addition the force at Colonel Lewis's disposal consisted of half the Xth Soudanese, a small detachment of the IXth Soudanese, two Maxim guns, and a doctor. Besides the regular troops, there were also the band of Irregulars under the Sheikh Bakr, numbering 380 men, 100 men under the Sheikh of Rosaires, and a few other unclassified scallywags.

Colonel Lewis determined to attack what part of Ahmed Fedil's force still remained on the east bank of the river, and on Christmas Day, at five o'clock in the afternoon, he marched with every man he could muster in the direction of Dakhila. The enterprise was already launched when news arrived that only one *rub* of the Dervishes had crossed to the west bank. This meant that the force which Colonel Lewis would have to deal with was more formidable than he had expected. The Sheikh Bakr, however, sent encouraging reports of the demoralisation of the enemy, declared that he had won great victories over them, and claimed to have wounded Ahmed Fedil himself. It was decided to push on.

Marching in single file along a track which led through a dense forest of thorny trees, the column reached Abu Zogholi, a village thought to be half, but really not one-third, of the way to Dakhila, at eleven o'clock on Christmas night. Here they bivouacked until 3 A.M. on the 26th, when the march was resumed in the same straggling order through the same tangled scrub. Daylight found them still several miles from the Dervish position, and it was not until eight o'clock that the enemy's outposts were discovered. After a few shots the

Arab picket fell back, and the advance guard, hurrying after them, emerged from the forest upon the open ground of the river bank, broken only by palms and patches of high grass. Into this space the whole column gradually debouched. Before them the Blue Nile, shining in the early sunlight like a silver band, flowed swiftly; and beyond its nearest waters rose a long, bare, gravel island crowned with clumps of sandhills, to the shelter of which several hundred Dervishes, surprised by the sudden arrival of the troops, were scampering. Beyond the island, on the tall tree-clad cliff of the further bank, other minute figures moved and bustled. The discordant sound of horns and drums floating across the waters, and the unfurling of many bright flags, proclaimed the presence and the intention of the hostile force.

The Dervish position was well chosen and of great defensive strength. A little to the north of Dakhila the Blue Nile bifurcates—one rapid but shallow stream flowing fairly straight under the east bank; another very deep stream running in a wide curve under the west bank, cutting into it so that it is precipitous. These two branches of the river enclose an island a mile and a quarter long by 1,400 yards wide, and on this island, surrounded by a natural moat of swiftly flowing water, was the Dervish *dêm*. The western side of the island rose into a line of low sandhills covered with scrub and grass, with a steep reverse slope towards the foreshore of the river-bank; and here, in this excellent cover, what eventually proved to be three-quarters of the force

[1] Map, 'The Action at Rosaires,' to face page 286.

of Ahmed Fedil were drawn up. Backed against the deep arm of the river they had no choice, nor indeed any other wish, but to fight. Before them stretched a bare slope of heavy shingle, 1,000 yards wide, over which their enemies must advance to the attack. Behind them the high precipitous west bank of the river, which rose in some places to a height of fifty feet, was lined with the three hundred riflemen that had already crossed; and from this secure position Ahmed Fedil and four of his Emirs were able to watch, assist, and direct the defence of the island. The force on the island was under the sole command of the Emir Saadalla, of Gedaref repute; but, besides his own followers, most of the men of the other four Emirs were concentrated there.

The prospect was uninviting. Colonel Lewis discovered that he had absurdly under-rated the strength and discipline of the Dervish force. It had been continually reported that the defeats at Gedaref had demoralised them, and that their numbers did not exceed 2,000 men. Moreover, he had marched to the attack in the belief that they were equally divided on both sides of the river. Retreat was, however, impossible. Strong as was the position of the enemy, formidable as was their strength, the direct assault was actually safer than a retirement through the nineteen miles of gloomy forest which lay between the adventurous column and Rosaires. The British officer immediately determined to engage. At nine o'clock Sir Henry Hill brought his two Maxims, which represented the artillery of the little force, into action in

good positions, while the Xth Soudanese, and most of the irregulars lined the east bank. Musketry and Maxim fire was now opened at long range. The Dervishes replied, and as the smoke of their rifles gradually revealed their position and their numbers, it soon became evident that no long-range fire could dislodge them; and Colonel Lewis resolved, in spite of the great disparity of force and disadvantage of ground, to attack them with the bayonet. Some time was spent in finding fords across the interposing arm of the river, and it was not until past ten o'clock that Bakr's men crossed on to the island, and, supported by a company of the Xth Soudanese, advanced towards the enemy's right and took up a position at about 800 yards from their line, to cover the rest of the passage. Although the arm of the river which the troops had to cross was the more shallow, it was sufficiently large. The width was 100 yards, the water in some places three and a half feet deep, and the current very strong. The Xth Soudanese, losing a few men from the fire of the Dervishes on the west bank, waded through by companies at the northern of the two fords, and formed along the bank.

Colonel Lewis now determined to turn the enemy's left from the north, attack them in flank, and roll them into the deep part of the river. With the Xth Soudanese, under Colonel Nason [14] and Major Fergusson, he marched northwards along the river's edge, sheltering as far as possible under the curve of the bank from the fire, which now began to cause casualties. Having

[14] Lieut.-Col. F. G. Nason, Scottish Rifles and Egyptian army.

reached the position from which it was determined to deliver the attack, the battalion deployed into line, and, changing front half left, advanced obliquely by alternate companies across the bare shingle towards the sandhills. As they advanced, a galling fire was opened upon the left flank by two hundred Dervishes admirably placed on a knoll. Major Fergusson was detached with one company to dislodge them. The remaining four companies continued the attack.

The Dervish musketry now became intense. The whole front of the island position was lined with smoke, and behind it, from the high cliff of the west bank, a long half-circle of riflemen directed a second tier of converging bullets upon the four hundred charging men. The shingle jumped and stirred in all directions as it was struck. A hideous whistling filled the air. The Soudanese began to drop on all sides, 'just like the Dervishes at Omdurman,' and the ground was soon dotted with the bodies of the killed and wounded. 'We did not,' said an officer, 'dare to look back.' But, undaunted by fire and cross-fire, the heroic black soldiers—demons who would not be denied—pressed forward without the slightest check or hesitation, and, increasing their pace to a swift run in their eagerness to close with the enemy, reached the first sandhills and found cover beneath them. A quarter of the battalion had already fallen, and lay strewn on the shingle. But among the fallen men, still exposed to a cruel fire, Captain Jennings,[15] the only doctor, although racked with malarial fever, was running about, tying up the

[15] Captain J. W. Jennings, R.A.M.C.

wounds with frantic energy. It was the spirit of the day. Men have won the Victoria Cross for less.

The rapidity of their advance had exhausted the Soudanese, and Lewis ordered Nason to halt under cover of the sandhills for a few minutes, so that the soldiers might get their breath before the final effort. Thereupon the Dervishes, seeing that the troops were no longer advancing, and believing that the attack was repulsed, resolved to clinch the matter. Ahmed Fedil from the west bank sounded the charge on drum and bugle, and with loud shouts of triumph and enthusiasm the whole force on the island rose from among the upper sandhills, and, waving their banners, advanced impetuously in counter-attack. But the Xth Soudanese, panting yet unconquerable, responded to the call of their two white officers, and, crowning the little dunes behind which they had sheltered, met the exultant enemy with a withering fire and a responding shout.

The range was short and the fire effective. The astonished Arabs wavered and broke; and then the soldiers, nobly led, swept forward in a long scattered line and drove the enemy from one sandy ridge to another—drove them across the rolling and uneven ground, every fold of which contained Dervishes—drove them steadily back over the sandhills, until all who were not killed or wounded were penned at the extreme southern end of the island, with the deep unfordable arm of the river behind them and the fierce black soldiers, roused to fury by their losses, in front.

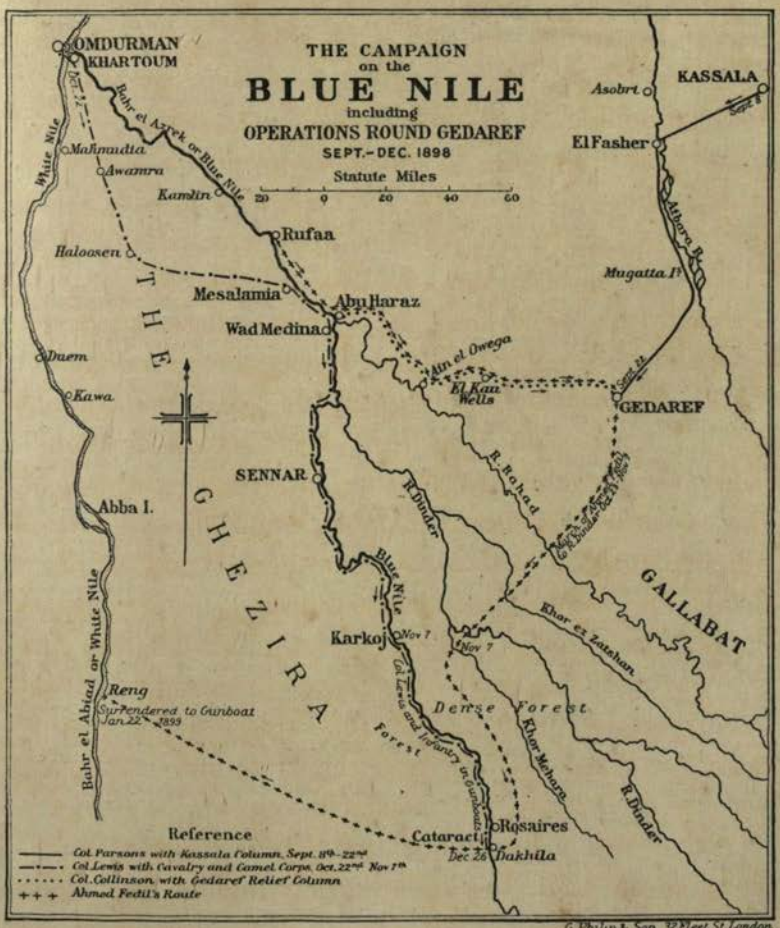
The Sheikh Bakr with his men and the rest of the irregulars joined the victorious Soudanese, and from the

cover of the sandhills, now in the hands of the troops, a terrible fire was opened upon the Dervishes crowded together on the bare and narrow promontory and on the foreshore. Some tried to swim across the rushing river to their friends on the west bank. Many were drowned—among them Saadalla, who sank horse and man beneath the flood. Others took refuge from the fire by standing up to their necks in the stream. The greater part, however, escaped to a smaller island a little further up the river. But the cover was bad, the deep water prevented further flight, and, after being exposed for an hour and a half to the musketry of two companies, the survivors—300 strong—surrendered.

By 11.30 the whole island was in the possession of the troops. It was, however, still swept and commanded by the fire from the west bank. The company which had been detached to subdue the Dervish riflemen were themselves pinned behind their scanty cover. Major Fergusson was severely wounded and a third of his men were hit. To withdraw this company and the wounded was a matter of great difficulty; it was necessary to carry the Maxims across the river and bring them into action at 400 yards. Firing ceased at last at three o'clock, and the victors were left to measure their losses and their achievement.

There was neither time nor opportunity to count the enemy's dead, but it is certain that at least 500 Arabs were killed on the island. Two thousand one hundred and twenty-seven fighting men and several hundred women and children surrendered. Five hundred and seventy-six rifles, large quantities of

ammunition, and a huge pile of spears and swords were captured. Ahmed Fedil indeed escaped with a numerous following across the Ghezira, but so dis-



heartened were the Dervishes by this crushing defeat that the whole force surrendered to the gunboat *Metemma* at Reng, on the White Nile, on the 22nd of

January, and their leader was content to fly with scarcely a dozen followers to join the Khalifa.

The casualties among the troops in the action amounted to 41 killed and 145 wounded, including Major Fergusson; and the Xth Soudanese, on whom the brunt of the fighting fell, suffered a loss of 25 non-commissioned officers and men killed, one British officer, 6 native officers, and 117 non-commissioned officers and men wounded, out of a total strength of 511. The rest of the loss was among the irregulars, 495 of whom took part in the engagement.[16]

The action of Rosaires is the last fight, as it is also the hardest, in the account of the River War. The determination and the judgment of the commander and the great gallantry of the troops alone gained the victory, in spite of every difficulty and disadvantage. Each of the five British officers engaged displayed a courage which was conspicuous even among the fearless Soudanese. There was no humbug about this action; and those who have extolled the well-rewarded soldiers of Omdurman may yet find a cheer for the victors of Rosaires. There is honour for all, but most of all the honours rest with the Xth Soudanese. Their ordered advance over a bare plain and under a searching fire

[16] The following was the actual strength of the force:

Xth Soudanese	511
IXth „	30
Maxim Gun Detachment	9
Medical Corps	3
Total	553
Irregulars	495

Altogether, including the commander and the medical officer, there were five British officers and two British sergeants with the troops.

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both in front and flank, their accurate change of direction, their firm reception of the counter-attack, and their final dashing charge over the sandhills, combine to make an historic military achievement—as fine as the charge of the Gordon Highlanders at Dargai, finer than the charge of the 21st Lancers at Omdurman, and which entitles the regular Soudanese battalions of the Egyptian army to rank with the best troops, British or native, among the armed forces of the Empire.

By these operations the whole of the regions bordering on the Niles were cleared of hostile forces, dotted with military posts, and brought back to Egyptian authority. The Khalifa, however, still remained in Kordofan. After he had made good his escape from the battlefield of Omdurman, Abdullahi had hurried in the direction of El Obeid, moving by the wells of Shat and Zeregia, which at that season of the year were full of water after the rains. At Abu Sherai, having shaken off the pursuit of the friendlies, he halted, encamped, and busily set to work to reorganise his shattered forces. How far he succeeded in this will presently be apparent. In the beginning of November, the general drying-up of the country turned the wells at Abu Sherai into pools of mud, and the Khalifa moved westward to Aigaila. Here he was joined by the Emir El Katem with the El Obeid garrison. This chief and his followers had never been engaged with the 'Turks,' and were consequently fresh and valiant. Their arrival greatly encouraged the force which the Khalifa had rallied. A large *dêm* was formed at

Aigaila, and here, since the water was plentiful during December, Abdullahi abode quietly, sending his raiding parties far afield to collect grain and other supplies.

The place was full of memories for the fallen potentate. A few miles from his camp stood the village of Abu Rokba, where he himself had been born and where his father lay buried; and the savage chief made almost daily journeys to pray at the grave. The neighbourhood was, moreover, famous as the scene of the destruction of Hicks's army. The Khalifa might recall the events of that early triumph; the miserable Egyptians crawling sluggishly to their doom, the active Arab cavalry hanging in swarms on their flanks and rear, the holy Mahdi advancing to meet the enemy; the battle of Shekan, the massacre, and lastly the stubborn death of the English General—the first of those terrible white men to clash with the Dervish revolt. Encouraged by these recollections, the Khalifa resolved to remain at Aigaila, near the bones of his father and the scene of the Mahdi's victory. The events of Omdurman had made a strong impression on his mind, and, in spite of the encouragement which he derived from the arrival and presence of El Katem, Abdullahi was always moody and often sunk in the deepest gloom; and we learn that at a council held before the fast of Ramadan, when he desired coffee he said, 'Gib el Mekhana' ('Pass the machine-guns') instead of 'Gib el Tanaka' ('Pass the coffee-pot'). He prayed continually during December that Ahmed Fedil might join him, and, little knowing

what detained the Emir, sent him many messages to hurry. But although the Khalifa had due cause for despondency, he was far from being in the defenceless condition that the Egyptian authorities believed.

As soon as the Sirdar, who had returned from England, received the news of the success at Rosaires he determined to make an attempt to capture the Khalifa; and on the 29th of December sent for Colonel Kitchener,[17] to whom as the senior available officer he had decided to entrust this honourable enterprise. The Colonel was directed to take a small mixed force into Kordofan and to reconnoitre the enemy's position. If possible, he was to attack and capture Abdullahi, whose followers were not believed to exceed 1,000 ill-armed men. The 'Kordofan Field Force,' as its officers called it, was formed as follows[18]:—

Commanding: COLONEL KITCHENER
Assistant Adjutant-General: LIEUTENANT-COLONEL MITFORD[19]
Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General: MAJOR WILLIAMS[20]

Troops

Two Squadrons, Egyptian Cavalry
2nd Egyptians
XIVth Soudanese
Two Galloping Maxims
Two Mule Guns
One Company, Camel Corps.

Camel transport was drawn from the Atbara and from the Blue Nile. The troops were conveyed by steamer to Duem, and concentrated there during the

[17] Lieut.-Col. F. W. Kitchener, *p.s.c.*, West Yorkshire Regiment.
* Map, 'The Shirkela Reconnaissance,' page 299.
[18] For full composition, see Appendix A.
[19] Lieut.-Col. B. R. Mitford, East Surrey Regiment.
[20] Major E. J. C. Williams, The Buffs and Egyptian army.

first week in 1899. The camels were collected at Kawa, and, although several of the convoys had to march as much as 400 miles, the whole number had arrived by the 10th of January.

The prime difficulty of the operation was the want of water. The Khalifa's position was nearly 125 miles from the river. The intervening country is, in the wet season, dotted with shallow lakes, but by January these are reduced to mud puddles and only occasional pools remain. All the water needed by the men, horses, and mules of the column must, therefore, be carried. The camels must go thirsty until one of the rare pools—the likely places for which were known to the native guides—might be found. Now the capacity of a camel for enduring without drinking is famous; but it has its limits. If he start having filled himself with water, he can march for five days without refreshment. If he then have another long drink, he can continue for five days more. But this strains his power to the extreme; he suffers acutely during the journey, and probably dies at its end. In war, however, the miseries of animals cannot be considered; their capacity for work alone concerns the commander. It was thought that, partly by the water carried in skins, partly by the drying-up pools, and partly by the camel's power of endurance, it might be just possible for a force of about 1,200 men to strike out 125 miles into the desert, to have three days to do their business in and to come back to the Nile. This operation, which has been called the Shirkela Reconnaissance, occupied the Kordofan Field Force.

Two routes to the Dervish *dêm*—both disused caravan tracks, along which wells had once existed—suggested themselves. The first was that followed by the Khalifa from Duem *viâ* Shat and Zeregia. The second started opposite Abba island from Kohi. Colonel Kitchener decided to try the former. Detachments of infantry were therefore sent on to Shat and Zeregia to open up the old wells there, so that the column might start duly filled with water from the furthest possible point. The accounts of the wells were reassuring. Forty were sunk to a depth of thirty feet, and the report was that, although the smell was fearful, water in considerable quantities was oozing in. A water depôt of iron tanks was established in the desert ten miles beyond Zeregia, and with this as a base camel patrols were able to search the country for another forty miles for pools. None were however found, and Lieutenant Burges,[21] who surveyed the route, reported that beyond Zeregia it was absolutely waterless. To settle the matter finally, the wells at Zeregia suddenly failed on the 10th of January, and the route *viâ* Shat was plainly impracticable. Colonel Kitchener and his main body had already started, and on the 11th they countermarched and returned to Duem. The camel transport and the mounted troops cut across the desert to Kawa.

The route from Kohi alone remained. All the troops reached the Nile again on the 13th, and by the 21st had been transported by steamer to Kohi. Tudway

[21] Lieut. F. Burges, Gloucester Regiment and Egyptian army.

with the Camel Corps, and Mitford with some 'friendlies,' were sent to reconnoitre the new route, and meanwhile the whole force was employed in repairing and testing four thousand skin bags to carry its water. The report of the new route was again encouraging. At Gedid the old wells promised sufficient water to refill the skins, and within seven miles of the wells were two large pools at which the camels could be watered. The column therefore prepared for the journey. Nothing was neglected which could increase the water carried or diminish the number of drinkers. Only twelve cavalry were taken. The horses of the Maxim guns and the mules of the battery were reduced to the lowest possible number. Every person, animal, or thing not vitally necessary was remorselessly excluded. In order to lighten the loads and make room for more water, even the ammunition was limited to 100 rounds per rifle. The daily consumption of water was restricted to one pint for men, six gallons for horses, and five for mules. To lessen the thirst caused by the heat Colonel Kitchener decided to march by night. An advanced depôt was formed at Gedid and food for two days accumulated there. Besides this, each unit carried ten, and the column transport seven days' rations. Thus the force was supplied with food up till the 9th of February, and their radius of action, except as restricted by water, was nineteen days. This was further extended five days by the arrangement of a convoy which was to set out on the 30th of January to meet them as they returned.

The column—numbering 1,604 officers and men and

1,624 camels or other beasts of burden [22]—started from Kohi at 3 P.M. on the 23rd of January, having despatched a small advanced party to the wells of Gedid twelve hours before. The country through which their route lay was of barren and miserable aspect. They had embarked on a sandy ocean with waves of thorny scrub and withered grass. From the occasional rocky ridges, which allowed a more extended view, this sterile jungle could be seen stretching indefinitely on all sides. During the first march, while the troops were still in the vicinity of the river, the usual Nile fauna were met with—guinea-fowl, sand-grouse, gazelle, ariel, and at this latitude numerous monkeys. Most of all the African hare abounded; but even he shared in the general desolation, being a very different beast from our fine English hares—only, in fact, a dried-up rabbit with long bat ears. Ten miles from the river all vestiges of animal life disappeared. The land was a desert; not the open desert of the Northern Soudan,

[22] The actual composition was as follows:—

Corps	British Officers	Native Officers	Followers	N.C.O.s and men	Horses	Mules	Camels	Remarks
XIVth Soudanese	3	20	4	530	4	—	180	Riding camels
2nd Egyptians	3	15	4	397	4	—	—	
Camel Corps	2	2	—	100	—	—	104	Riding camels
Cavalry	1	1	1	12	14	—	—	
Artillery	1	1	—	50	4	14	11	Ammunition camels
Maxims	1	1	1	28	14	6	10	Ammunition camels
Hospital	1	2	3	8	1	—	—	
Headquarters	4	2	4	6	4	—	—	
Transport	1	5	140	350	4	—	1,250	
Total	17	49	157	1,381	49	20	1,555	

but one vast unprofitable thicket, whose interlacing thorn bushes, unable to yield the slightest nourishment to living creatures, could yet obstruct their path

Through this the straggling column, headed in the daylight by the red Egyptian flag and at night by a lantern on a pole, wound its weary way, the advanced guard cutting a path with axes and marking the track with strips of calico, the rearguard driving on the laggard camels and picking up the numerous loads which were cast. Three long marches brought them on the 25th to Gedid. The first detachment had already arrived and had opened up the wells. None gave much water; all emitted a foul stench, and one was occupied by a poisonous serpent eight feet long—the sole inhabitant. The camels were sent to drink at the pool seven miles away, and it was hoped that some of the water-skins could be refilled; but, after all, the green slime was thought unfit for human consumption, and they had to come back empty.

The march was resumed on the 26th. The trees were now larger; the scrub became a forest; the sandy soil changed to a dark red colour; but otherwise the character of the country was unaltered. The column rested at Abu Ḥokba. A few starving inhabitants who occupied the huts pointed out the grave of the Khalifa's father and the little straw house in which Abdullahi was wont to pray during his visits. Lately, they said, he had retired from Aigaila to Shirkela, but even from this latter place he had made frequent pilgrimages.

At the end of the next march, which was made by

day, the guides, whose memories had been refreshed by flogging, discovered a large pool of good water, and all drank deeply in joy and relief. A small but strong *zeriba* was built near this precious pool, and the reserve food and a few sick men were left with a small garrison under an Egyptian officer. The column resumed their journey. On the 29th they reached Aigaila, and here, with feelings of astonishment, scarcely less than Robinson Crusoe experienced at seeing the footprint in the sand, they came upon the Khalifa's abandoned camp. A wide space had been cleared of bush, and the trees, stripped of their smaller branches, presented an uncanny appearance. Beyond stood the encampment—a great multitude of yellow spear-grass dwellings, perfectly clean, neatly arranged in streets and squares, and stretching for miles. The aspect of this strange deserted town, rising, silent as a cemetery, out of the awful scrub, chilled everyone who saw it. Its size might indeed concern their leader. At the very lowest computation it had contained 20,000 people. How many of these were fighting men? Certainly not less than 8,000 or 9,000. Yet the expedition had been sent on the assumption that there were scarcely 1,000 warriors with the Khalifa!

Observing every precaution of war, the column crawled forward, and the cavalry and Camel Corps, who covered the advance, soon came in contact with the enemy's scouts. Shots were exchanged and the Arabs retreated. According to two destitute old women who had deserted from, or had been cast out of the Dervish camp, the Khalifa, Osman Digna, El Katem, Osman

Sheikh-ed-Din, and Ahmed Fedil, with a great army, were waiting in battle array on the hill of Shirkela. The column halted three miles to the east of this position, and, forming a strong *zeriba*, passed the night in expectation of an attack. Nothing however happened, and at dawn Mitford was sent out with some mounted 'friendlies' to reconnoitre. At ten o'clock he returned, and his report confirmed the conclusions which had been drawn from the size of the Aigaila camp. Creeping forward to a good point of view, the officer had seen the Dervish flags lining the crest of the hill. From their number, the breadth of front covered, and the numerous figures of men moving about them, he estimated not less than 2,000 Arab riflemen in the front line. How many more were in reserve it was impossible to say. The position was, moreover, of great strength, being surrounded by deep ravines and pools of water.

The news was startling. The small force was 125 miles from its base. Behind it lay an almost waterless country. In front was a powerful enemy. An informal council of war was held. The Sirdar had distinctly ordered that, whatever happened, there was to be no waiting; the troops were either to attack or retire. Colonel Kitchener decided to retire. For this he has since been severely criticised by many military officers. The retreat of the column undoubtedly encouraged the Khalifa. The soldiers were bitterly disappointed at the fruitless result of their labours and sufferings. Nevertheless, Colonel Kitchener was quite right to be prudent. Had he attacked and won, in

spite of all odds, the Khalifa might easily have escaped, and the situation would have been little improved. Had he been beaten he must have been destroyed. The flame would have spread throughout the Soudan, and in all probability a British division would have been hurried from England. It is so easy to give the order to attack, so hard to refrain, that no little credit is due to the soldier who is not prepared to imperil the results of a whole war for the sake of his personal ambition, and who does not hesitate to decide upon an unpopular course. The decision having been taken, the next step was to get beyond the enemy's reach as quickly as possible, and the force began its retreat on the same night. The homeward march was not less long and trying than the advance, and neither hopes of distinction nor glamour of excitement cheered the weary soldiers. As they toiled gloomily back towards the Nile, the horror of the accursed land grew upon all. Hideous spectacles of human misery were added to the desolation of the hot, thorny scrub and stinking pools of mud. The starving inhabitants had been lured from their holes and corners by the outward passage of the troops, and hoped to snatch some food from the field of battle. Disappointed, they now approached the camps at night in twos and threes, making piteous entreaties for any kind of nourishment. Their appeals were perforce unregarded; not an ounce of spare food remained. There was enough for the march and no more. One woman, almost a skeleton, crawled stark naked into the camp at Abu Addel, to beg for a few clothes to cover her limbs. No one owned anything but what they stood

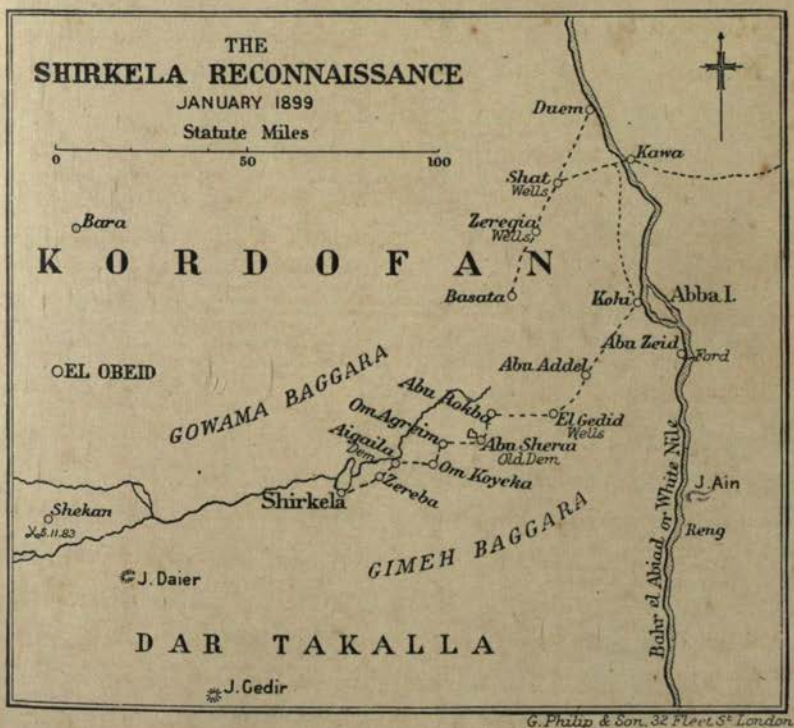
up in, and she was about to be dismissed despairing, when an officer remembered the white calico which had been used to mark the route. About four yards remained uncut, and this was presented to the poor creature, whereat—to quote the words of the stern yet not unpitying soldier who told me the tale—'she wept over it, and then knelt down and kissed and hugged it, crawling to our feet and kissing them too, so great was her joy at being clothed once more.'

Towards the end of the journey the camels, terribly strained by their privation of water, began to die, and it was evident that the force would have no time to spare. One young camel, though not apparently exhausted, refused to proceed, and even when a fire was lighted round him remained stubborn and motionless; so that, after being terribly scorched, he had to be shot. Others fell and died all along the route. Their deaths brought some relief to the starving inhabitants. For as each animal was left behind, the officers, looking back, might see first one, then another furtive figure emerge from the bush and pounce on the body like a vulture, and in many cases before life was extinct the famished natives were devouring the flesh.

On the 5th of February the column reached Kohi, and the Kordofan Field Force, having overcome many difficulties and suffered great hardships, broke up, unsuccessful through no fault of its commander, its officers, or its men.

This is not a very exhilarating incident with which to close the story of the war; but in describing the horrors it is easy to overrate the importance of the

Shirkela Reconnaissance. The Khalifa remains at large, and in possession of an army. Moreover, as may have appeared from the account, he is difficult to reach. He is no longer near the great river, by which hostile forces could move leisurely forward to his



destruction. If troops be sent after him in the rainy season, when there is water, he has only to retire to still more remote regions.

On the other hand, once off the Nile he can have no permanent authority. The drying-up of the pools of water, the increasing famine which ever surrounds his camp, and the spectacle of good treatment which

deserters receive from the Government, have already reduced his following, and there is every reason to hope that this process of attrition will shortly bring him down to the level of an ordinary Arab freebooter. Sooner or later he will have to be dealt with. In the meantime, although his disturbing influence may delay the settlement of the country, it cannot seriously menace the conquering Power as long as the people of the Soudan are ruled with tolerance and justice.

CHAPTER XXIV

'THE FASHODA INCIDENT'

A mysterious intrigue—The impending collision—The Macdonald expedition—*La haute politique*—The tale of the *Tewfikia*—Small-bore bullets—The affair at Reng—On the White Nile—The Marchand Mission—The Sirdar and Marchand—The Fashoda garrison—Public opinion—The plot that failed—Fashoda—Polite antagonism—The Dinkas and Shillooks—Captain Germain—The evacuation of Fashoda—A strange omission—The Anglo-French Agreement of the 21st of March 1899—A 'Sphere of Aspiration'—The best of the bargain—The division of the spoils—The Soudan Agreement—The 'Fourth Dimension' in diplomacy—Anomalous, but practical.

THE long succession of events, of which I have attempted to give some account, has not hitherto affected to any great extent other countries than those which are drained by the Nile. But this chapter demands a wider view, since it must describe an incident which might easily have convulsed Europe, and from which far-reaching consequences have arisen. It is unlikely that the world will ever learn the details of the subtle scheme of which the Marchand Mission was a famous part. We may say with certainty that the French Government did not intend a small expedition, at great peril to themselves, to seize and hold an obscure swamp on the Upper Nile. But it is not possible to define the other arrangements. What part the Abyssinians were expected to play, what services had been rendered

them and what inducements they were offered, what attitude was to be adopted to the Khalifa, what use was to be made of the local tribes: all this is veiled in the mystery of intrigue. It is well known that for several years France, at some cost to herself and at a greater cost to Italy, had courted the friendship of Abyssinia, and that the weapons by which the Italians were defeated at Adowa had been mainly supplied through French channels. A small quick-firing gun of Continental manufacture and of recent make which was found in the possession of the Khalifa seems to point to the existence or contemplation of similar relations with the Dervishes. But how far these operations were designed to assist the Marchand Mission is known only to those who initiated them, and to a few others who have so far kept their own counsel.

The undisputed facts are few. Towards the end of 1896 a French expedition was despatched from the Atlantic into the heart of Africa under the command of Major Marchand. The reoccupation of Dongola was then practically complete, and the British Government were earnestly considering the desirability of a further advance. In the beginning of 1897 a British expedition, under Colonel Macdonald,[1] and comprising a dozen carefully selected officers, set out from England to Uganda, landed at Mombassa, and struck inland. The misfortunes which fell upon this enterprise are beyond the scope of this account, and I shall not dwell upon the local jealousies and disputes which marred it. It is sufficient to observe that Colonel Macdonald was

[1] Brevet Lieut.-Colonel I. R. L. Macdonald, R.E.

provided with Soudanese troops who were practically in a state of mutiny and actually mutinied two days after he assumed command. The officers were compelled to fight for their lives. Several were killed. A year was consumed in suppressing the mutiny and the revolt which arose out of it. If the object of the expedition was to reach the Upper Nile, it was soon obviously unattainable, and the Government were glad to employ the officers in making geographical surveys.

At the beginning of 1898 it was clear to those who, with the fullest information, directed the foreign policy of Great Britain that no results affecting the situation in the Soudan could be expected from the Macdonald Expedition. The advance to Khartoum and the reconquest of the lost provinces had been irrevocably undertaken. An Anglo-Egyptian force was already concentrating at Berber. Lastly, the Marchand Mission was known to be moving towards the Upper Nile, and it was a probable contingency that they would arrive at their destination within a few months. It was therefore evident that the line of advance of the powerful army moving south from the Mediterranean, and of the tiny expedition moving east from the Atlantic must intersect before the end of the year, and that intersection would involve a collision between the Powers of Great Britain and France.

I do not pretend to any special information not hitherto given to the public in this further matter, but the reader may consider for himself whether the conciliatory policy which Lord Salisbury pursued towards Russia in China at this time—a policy which excited

hostile criticism in England—was designed to influence the impending conflict on the Upper Nile and make it certain, or at least likely, that when Great Britain and France should be placed in direct opposition, France should find herself alone.

With these introductory reflections we may return to the theatre of the war.

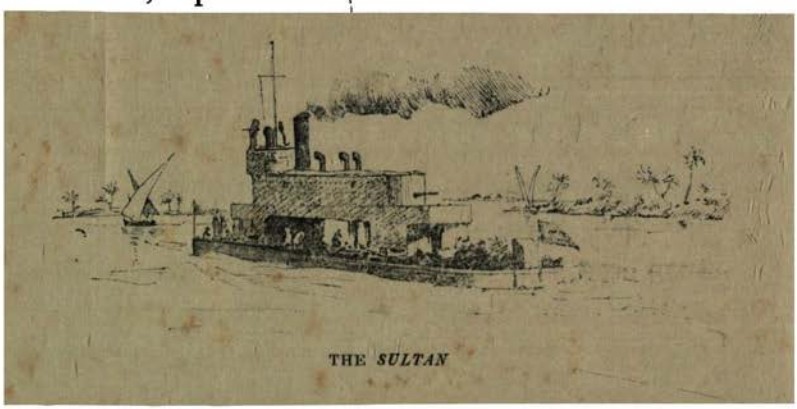
On the 7th of September, five days after the battle and capture of Omdurman, the *Tewfikia*, a small Dervish steamer—one of those formerly used by General Gordon—came drifting and paddling down the river. Her Arab crew soon perceived by the Egyptian flags which were hoisted on the principal buildings, and by the battered condition of the Mahdi's Tomb, that all was not well in the city; and then, drifting a little further, they found themselves surrounded by the white gunboats of the 'Turks,' and so incontinently surrendered. The story they told their captors was a strange one. They had left Omdurman a month earlier, in company with the steamer *Safia*, carrying a force of 500 men, with the Khalifa's orders to go up the White Nile and collect grain. For some time all had been well; but on approaching the old Government station of Fashoda they had been fired on by black troops commanded by white officers under a strange flag—and fired on with such effect that they had lost some forty men killed and wounded. Doubting who these formidable enemies might be, the foraging expedition had turned back, and the Emir in command, having disembarked and formed a camp at a place on the east bank called Reng, had sent the *Tewfikia* back to ask the Khalifa for instruc-

tions and reinforcements. The story was carried to the Sirdar, and ran like wildfire through the camp. Many officers made their way to the river, where the steamer lay, to test for themselves the truth of the report. The woodwork of the hull was marked with many newly made holes, and cutting into these with their penknives the officers extracted bullets—not the roughly cast leaden balls, the bits of telegraph wire, or old iron which savages use, but the conical nickel-covered bullets of small-bore rifles such as are fired by civilised forces alone. Here was positive proof. A European Power was on the Upper Nile: which? Some said it was the Belgians from the Congo; some that an Italian expedition had arrived; others thought that the strangers were French; others, again, believed in the Foreign Office—it was a British expedition after all. The Arab crew were cross-examined as to the flag they had seen. Their replies were inconclusive. It had bright colours, they declared; but what those colours were and what their arrangement might be they could not tell; they were poor men, and God was very great.

Curiosity found no comfort but in patience or speculation. The camp for the most part received the news with a shrug. After their easy victory the soldiers walked delicately. They knew that they belonged to the most powerful force that had ever penetrated the heart of Africa. If there was to be more war, the Government had but to give the word, and the Grand Army of the Nile would do by these newcomers as they had done by the Dervishes.

On the 8th the Sirdar started up the White Nile

for Fashoda with five steamers, the XIth and XIIIth battalions of Soudanese, two companies of the Cameron Highlanders, Peake's battery of artillery, and four Maxim guns. Three days later he arrived at Reng, and there found, as the crew of the *Tewfikia* had declared, some 500 Dervishes encamped on the bank, and the *Safia* steamer moored to it. These stupid fellows had the temerity to open fire on the vessels. Whereat the *Sultan*, steaming towards their *dêm*, replied with a fierce shell fire which soon



THE *SULTAN*

put them to flight. The *Safia*, being under steam, made some attempt to escape: whither, it is impossible to say: and Commander Keppel by a well-directed shell in her boilers blew her up, much to the disgust of the Sirdar, who wanted to add her to his flotilla.

After this incident the expedition continued its progress up the White Nile. The *sudd* which was met with two days' journey south of Khartoum did not in this part of the Nile offer any obstacle to navigation, as the strong current of the river clears the waterway;

but on either side of the channel a belt of the tangled weed, varying from twelve to twelve hundred yards in breadth, very often prevented the steamers from approaching the bank to tie up. The banks themselves depressed the explorers by their melancholy inhospitality. At times the river flowed past miles of long grey grass and swamp-land, inhabited and habitable only by hippopotami. At times a vast expanse of dreary mud flats stretched as far as the eye could see. At others the forest, dense with an impenetrable undergrowth of thorn-bushes, approached the water, and the active forms of monkeys and even of leopards darted among the trees. But the country—whether forest, mud-flat, or prairie—was always damp and feverish: a wet land steaming under a burning sun and humming with mosquitoes and all kinds of insect life.

Onward and southward toiled the flotilla, splashing the brown water into foam and startling the strange creatures on the banks, until on the 18th of September they approached Fashoda. The gunboats waited, moored to the bank for some hours of the afternoon, to allow a message which had been sent by the Sirdar to the mysterious Europeans, to precede his arrival, and early in the morning of the 19th a small steel rowing-boat was observed coming down stream to meet the expedition. It contained a Senegalese sergeant and two men with a letter from Major Marchand announcing the arrival of the French troops and their formal occupation of the Soudan. It, moreover, congratulated the Sirdar on his victory, and welcomed him to Fashoda in the name of France.

A few miles' further progress brought the gunboats to their destination, and they made fast to the bank near the old Government buildings of the town. Major Marchand's party consisted of eight French officers or non-commissioned officers, and 120 black soldiers drawn from the Niger district. They possessed three steel boats fitted for sail or oars, and a small steam launch, the *Faidherbe*, which latter had, however, been sent south for reinforcements. They had six months' supplies of provisions for the French officers, and about three months' rations for the men; but they had no artillery, and were in great want of small-arm ammunition. Their position was indeed precarious. The little force was stranded, without communications of any sort, and with no means of either withstanding an attack or of making a retreat. They had fired away most of their cartridges at the Dervish foraging party, and were daily expecting a renewed attack. Indeed, it was with consternation that they had heard of the approach of the flotilla. The natives had carried the news swiftly up the river that the Dervishes were coming back with five steamers, and for three nights the French had been sleeplessly awaiting the assault of a powerful enemy.

Their joy and relief at the arrival of a European force was undisguised. The Sirdar and his officers on their part were thrilled with admiration at the wonderful achievements of this small band of heroic men. Two years had passed since they left the Atlantic coast. For six months they had been absolutely lost from human ken. They had fought with savages; they had

struggled with fever; they had climbed mountains and pierced the most gloomy forests. Five days and five nights they had stood up to their necks in swamp and water. A fifth of their number had perished; yet at last they had carried out their mission and, arriving at Fashoda on the 10th of July, had planted the tricolour upon the Upper Nile. Happy the nation that can produce such men! Dark though her fortunes, and vexed though her politics may be, while France can find soldiers like Marchand and, let us add, like Picquart, her citizens need not despair of the safety of the Republic, nor her generals of the honour of the army.

Moved by such reflections the British officers disembarked. Major Marchand, with a guard of honour, came to meet the General. They shook hands warmly. 'I congratulate you,' said the Sirdar, 'on all you have accomplished.' 'No,' replied the Frenchman, pointing to his troops; 'it is not I, but these soldiers who have done it.' And Kitchener, telling the story afterwards, remarked, 'Then I knew he was a gentleman.'

Into the diplomatic discussions that followed, it is not necessary to plunge. The Sirdar politely ignored the French flag, and, without interfering with the Marchand Expedition and the fort they occupied, hoisted the British and Egyptian colours with all due ceremony, amid musical honours and the salutes of the gunboats. A garrison was established at Fashoda, consisting of the XIth Soudanese, four guns of Peake's battery, and two Maxims, the whole under the command of Colonel Jackson, who was appointed military and civil commandant of the Fashoda district.

At three o'clock on the same afternoon the Sirdar and the gunboats resumed their journey to the south, and the next day reached the mouth of the Sobat, sixty-two miles from Fashoda. Here other flags were hoisted and another post formed with a garrison of half the XIIIth Soudanese battalion and the remaining two guns of Peake's battery. The expedition then turned northwards, leaving two gunboats—the *Sultan* and the *Abu Klea*—at the disposal of Colonel Jackson.

I do not attempt to describe the international negotiations and discussions that followed the receipt of the news in Europe, but it is pleasing to remember that a great crisis found England united. The determination of the Government was approved by the loyalty of the Opposition, supported by the calm resolve of the people, and armed with the efficiency of the fleet. At first indeed, while the Sirdar was still steaming southward, wonder and suspense filled all minds; but when suspense ended in the certainty that eight French adventurers were in occupation of Fashoda and claimed a territory twice as large as France, it gave place to a deep and bitter anger. There is no Power in Europe which the average Englishman regards with less animosity than France. Nevertheless, on this matter all were agreed. They should go. They should evacuate Fashoda, or else all the might, majesty, dominion, and power of everything that could by any stretch of the imagination be called 'British' should be employed to make them go.

Those who find it difficult to account for the hot, almost petulant, flush of resolve that stirred the nation

must look back over the long history of the Soudan drama. It had always been a duty to reconquer the abandoned territory. When it was found that this might be safely done, the duty became a pleasure. The operations were watched with extravagant attention, and while they progressed the earnestness of the nation increased. As the tides of barbarism were gradually driven back, the old sea-marks came one after another into view. Names of towns that were half forgotten—or remembered only with sadness—reappeared on the posters, in the despatches, and in the newspapers. We were going back. 'Dongola,' 'Berber,' 'Metemma'—who had not heard of them before? Now they were associated with triumph. Great armies fought on the Indian Frontier. There was war in the South and the East and the West of Africa. But England looked steadfastly towards the Nile and the expedition that crawled forward slowly, steadily, unchecked, apparently irresistible.

When the final triumph, long expected, came in all its completeness it was hailed with a shout of exultation, and the people of Great Britain, moved far beyond their wont, sat themselves down to give thanks to their God, their Government, and their General. Suddenly, on the chorus of their rejoicing there broke a discordant note. They were confronted with the fact that a 'friendly Power' had, unprovoked, endeavoured to rob them of the fruits of their victories. They now realised that while they had been devoting themselves to great military operations, in broad daylight and the eye of the world, and prosecuting an enterprise on

which they had set their hearts, other operations—covert, deceitful, behind-the-back—had been in progress in the heart of the Dark Continent, designed solely for the mischievous and spiteful object of depriving them of the produce of their labours. And they firmly set their faces against such behaviour.

First of all, the country was determined to have Fashoda or fight; and as soon as this was made clear, the French were willing to give way. Fashoda was a miserable swamp, of no particular value to them. Marchand, Lord Salisbury's 'explorer in difficulties upon the Upper Nile,' was admitted by the French Minister to be merely an 'emissary of civilisation.' It was not worth their while to embark on the hazards and convulsions of a mighty war for either swamp or emissary. Besides, the plot had failed. Guy Fawkes, true to his oath and his orders, had indeed reached the vault; but the other conspirators were less devoted. The Abyssinians had held aloof. The negro tribes gazed with wonder on the strangers, but had no intention of fighting for them. The pride and barbarism of the Khalifa rejected all overtures and disdained to discriminate between the various breeds of the accursed 'Turks.' Finally, the victory of Omdurman and its forerunner—the Desert Railway—had revolutionised the whole situation in the Nile valley. After some weeks of tension, the French Government consented to withdraw their expedition from the region of the Upper Nile.

Meanwhile events were passing at Fashoda. The town, the site of which had been carefully selected by

the old Egyptian Government, is situated on the left bank of the river, on a gentle slope of ground which rises about four feet above the level of the Nile at full flood. During the rainy season, which lasts from the end of June until the end of October, the surrounding country is one vast swamp, and Fashoda itself becomes an island. It is not, however, without its importance; for it is the only spot on the west shore for several hundred miles where landing from the river is possible. All the roads—mere camel-tracks—from Lower Kordofan meet at the Government post, but are only passable in the dry season. The soil is fertile, and, since there is a superabundance of sun and water, almost any crop or plant can be grown. The French officers, with the adaptive thrift of their nation, had already, in spite of the ravages of the water-rats, created a good vegetable garden, from which they were able to supplement their monotonous fare. The natives, however—aboriginal negroes of the Dinka and Shillook tribes—are unwilling to work, except to provide themselves with the necessaries of life; and since these are easily obtained, there is very little cultivation, and the fertility of the soil may be said to increase the poverty of the country. At all seasons of the year the climate of Fashoda is pestilential, and the malarial fever attacks every European or Egyptian, breaking down the strongest constitutions, and in many cases causing death.[2]

[2] The place is most unhealthy, and in March 1899 (the driest season of the year) out of a garrison of 317 men only 37 were fit for duty.—Sir William Garstin's Report: Egypt, No. 5, 1899.

On this dismal island, far from civilisation, health, or comfort, the Marchand Mission and the Egyptian garrison lived in polite antagonism for nearly three months. The French fort stood at the northern end. The Egyptian camp lay outside the ruins of the town. Civilities were constantly exchanged between the forces, and the British officers repaid the welcome gifts of fresh vegetables by newspapers and other conveniences. The Senegalese riflemen were smart and well-conducted soldiers, and the blacks of the Soudanese battalion soon imitated their officers in reciprocating courtesies. A feeling of friendship sprang up between Colonel Jackson and Major Marchand. The dashing commandant of the XIth Soudanese, whose Egyptian medals bear no fewer than fourteen clasps, was filled with a generous admiration for the French explorer. Realising the difficulties, he appreciated the magnificence of the achievement; and as he spoke excellent French a good and almost cordial understanding was established, and no serious disagreement occurred. But, notwithstanding the polite relations, the greatest vigilance was exercised by both sides, and whatever civilities were exchanged were of a formal nature.

The Dinkas and Shillooks had on the first arrival of the French made submission, and had supplied them with provisions. They knew that white men were said to be coming, and they did not realise that there were different races among the whites. Marchand was regarded as the advance guard of the Sirdar's army. But when the negroes gradually perceived that these bands of white men were at enmity

with each other—were, in fact, of rival tribes—they immediately transferred their allegiance to the stronger force, and, although their dread of the Egyptian flag was at first very marked, boycotted the French entirely.

In the middle of October despatches from France arrived for Marchand by steamer; and that officer, after reading them, determined to proceed to Cairo. Jackson, who was most anxious that no disagreement should arise, begged him to give positive orders to his subordinate to maintain the *status quo*, as had been agreed. Marchand gladly consented and departed for Omdurman, where he visited the battlefield, and found in the heaps of slain a grim witness of the destruction from which he had been saved, and so on to Cairo, where he was moved to tears and speeches. But in his absence Captain Germain, who succeeded to the command, diverged from his orders. No sooner had Marchand left than Germain, anxious to win distinction, embarked upon a most aggressive policy. He occupied the Dinka country on the right bank of the river, pushed reconnoitring parties into the interior, prevented the Dinka Sheikhs from coming to make their submission at Fashoda, and sent his boats and the *Faidherbe* steam launch, which had returned from the south, beyond the northern limits which the Sirdar had prescribed and Marchand had agreed to recognise.

Colonel Jackson protested again and again. Germain sent haughty replies, and persisted in his provoking policy. At last the British officer was compelled to declare that if any more patrols were sent into the Dinka country, he would not allow them to return

to the French post. Whereat Germain rejoined that he would meet force with force. All tempers were worn by fever, heat, discomfort, and monotony. The situation became very difficult, and the tact and patience of Colonel Jackson alone averted a conflict which would have resounded in all parts of the world. He confined his troops strictly to their lines, and moved as far from the French camp as was possible. But there was one dark day when the French officers worked in their shirts with their faithful Senegalese to strengthen the entrenchments, and busily prepared for a desperate struggle. On the other side little activity was noticeable. The Egyptian garrison, although under arms, kept out of sight, but a wisp of steam above the funnels of the redoubtable gunboats showed that all was ready.

At length in a fortunate hour Marchand returned, reproved his subordinate, and expressed his regrets to Colonel Jackson. Then it became known that the French Government had ordered the evacuation of Fashoda. Some weeks were spent in making preparations for the journey, but at length the day of departure arrived. At 8.20 on the morning of the 11th of December the French lowered their flag with salute and flourish of bugle. The British officers, who remained in their own camp and did not obtrude themselves, were distant but interested spectators. On the flag ceasing to fly, a *sous-officier* rushed up to the flagstaff and hurled it on the ground, shaking his fists and tearing his hair in bitterness and vexation, from which it is impossible to withhold sympathy, in view of

what these men had suffered, uselessly, and what they had done. The French then embarked, and at 9.30 steamed southward, the *Faidherbe* towing one oblong steel barge and one old steel boat, the other three boats sailing, all full of men. As the little flotilla passed the Egyptian camp a guard of honour of the XIth Soudanese saluted them and the band struck up their national anthem. The French acknowledged the compliment by dipping their flag, and in return the British and Egyptian flags were also lowered. The boats then continued their journey until they had rounded the bend of the river, when they came to land, and, honour being duly satisfied, Marchand and his officers returned to breakfast with Colonel Jackson. The meeting was very friendly. Jackson and Germain exchanged most elaborate compliments, and the commandant, in the name of the XIth Soudanese, presented the expedition with the banner of the Emir who had attacked them, which had been captured at Reng. Marchand shook hands all round, and the British officers bade their gallant enemies a final farewell.

Once again the eight Frenchmen, who had come so far and accomplished so much, set out upon their travels, to make a safe though tedious journey through Abyssinia to the coast, and thence home to the country they had served faithfully and well, and which was not unmindful of their services.

Colonel Jackson remained at Fashoda until, after several months, his health was so broken by constant fever that he was invalided home for a short period

of recuperation. It may be observed that a British officer has been seldom placed in a more responsible diplomatic position. But for his unfailing patience and good temper two civilised Powers might have been dragged into a bloody war. That lamentable issue was happily avoided. It is, however, painful to record that, in these days of cheap and promiscuous honours, no civil decoration or reward of any kind has as yet been conferred upon the accomplished officer who saved the situation at Fashoda.

Let us settle the international aspect of the reconquest of the Soudan while we are in the way with it. The disputes between France and England about the valley of the Upper Nile were terminated, as far as material cause was concerned, by an Agreement, signed at London on the 21st of March, 1899, by Lord Salisbury and M. Cambon. The Declaration limiting the respective Spheres of Influence of the two Powers took the form of an addition to the IVth Article of the Niger Convention, concluded in the previous year. The actual text, which is so concise that it may be understood from a few minutes' study with a map, will be found among the Appendices to this volume.[3] Its practical effect is to reserve the whole drainage system of the Nile to England and Egypt, and to engage that France shall have a free hand, so far as those Powers are concerned, in the rest of Northern Africa not yet occupied by Europeans west of the Nile Valley. This stupendous partition of half a continent by two European Powers could scarcely be expected to excite the enthusiasm of

[3] Appendix E.

the rest. Germany was, however, soothed by the promise of the observance of the 'Open Door' policy upon the Upper Nile. Italy, protesting meekly, followed Germany. Russia had no interests in this quarter. France and England were agreed. The rest were not consulted: and the Declaration may thus be said to have been recognised by the world in general.

It is perhaps early to attempt to pronounce with whom of the contracting Powers the advantage lies. France has acquired at a single stroke, without any serious military operations, the recognition of rights which may enable her to ultimately annex a vast African territory. At present what she has gained may be described as a recognised 'Sphere of Aspiration.' The future may convert this to a Sphere of Influence, and the distant future may witness the entire subjugation of the whole regions. There are many difficulties to be overcome. The powerful nomadic army of the fierce Rabeh has yet to be fought. The independent kingdom of Wadai must be conquered. Many smaller potentates will resist desperately: and the possibility of these formidable forces being focussed and directed by renegade Europeans adds to the gravity of the task. Altogether France has enough to occupy her in Central Africa for some time to come: and even when the long task is finished, the conquered regions are not likely to be of great value. They include the desert of the Great Sahara and wide expanses of equally profitless marsh. Only one important river, the Shari, flows through them, and never reaches the sea: and even Lake Chad, into which the Shari flows, appears to be leaking through some

subterranean exit, and is rapidly changing from a lake into a mighty swamp.

Great Britain and Egypt, upon the other hand, have secured a territory which, though smaller, is nevertheless of enormous extent, more fertile, comparatively easy of access, practically conquered, and containing the waterway of the Nile. France will be able to paint a great deal of the map of Africa blue, and the aspect of the continent upon paper may please the patriotic eye; but it is already possible to predict that before she can develope her property—can convert Aspiration into Influence, and Influence into Occupation—she will have to work harder, pay more, and wait longer for a return than will the more modest owners of the Nile Valley. And even when that return is obtained, it is unlikely that it will be of so much value.

It only remains to discuss the settlement made between the conquerors of the Soudan. Great Britain and Egypt had moved hand in hand up the great river, sharing, though unequally, the cost of the war in men and money. The prize belonged to both. The direct annexation of the Soudan by Great Britain would have been an injustice to Egypt. Moreover, the claim of the conquerors to Fashoda and other territories rested solely on the former rights of Egypt. On the other hand, if the Soudan became Egyptian again, it must wear the fetters of that imprisoned country. The Capitulations would apply to the Upper Nile regions, as to the Delta. Mixed Tribunals, Ottoman Suzerainty, and other vexatious burdens would be added to the difficulties of Soudan administration. To free the

new country from the curse of Internationalism was a paramount object. The Soudan Agreement[4] by Great Britain and Egypt, published on the 7th of March, 1899, achieves this. Like most of the best work done in Egypt by the British Agency, the Agreement was slipped through without attracting much notice. Under its authority a State has been created in the Nile Valley which is neither British nor Ottoman, nor anything else so far known to the law of Europe. International jurists are confronted with an entirely new political status. A diplomatic 'Fourth Dimension' has been discovered. Great Britain and Egypt rule the country together. The allied conquerors have become the joint-possessors. 'What does this Soudan Agreement mean?' the Austrian Consul-General asked Lord Cromer; and the British Agent, whom twenty-two years' acquaintance with Egyptian affairs had accustomed to anomalies, replied, 'It means simply this;' and handed him the inexplicable document, under which the conquered country may some day march to Peace and Plenty.

[4] Appendix E.

CHAPTER XXV

MILITARY REFLECTIONS

Comparisons—Dervish and Afridi—The waterway and the desert—The Staff—Slap-dash—Secure flanks—The Khalifa's strategy—Dervish tactics—1885 and 1898—*Zeribas*—Equipment—A cavalry convulsion—The work of the cavalry—Horse Artillery—Galloping Maxims—Cavalry killing power—Sword *v.* Lance and another—The Mauser pistol—Artillery projectiles—Effect of artillery at Omdurman—Its searching power—Maxim guns—Feeding of officers—Ethics of catering—The hospital arrangements—The fountain of honour—Medals and clasps—Decorations—The Soudan Gazette—Promotions—A *corps d'élite*—The principle of selection—The profession of arms—Lord Kitchener.

It is not unfitting that some part of a book of war should be devoted to discussing military events in their more technical aspects and to preserving the fruits of professional experience; for otherwise the science of human destruction will fall behind the general progress of the age. The moral of a tale which from beginning to end has been a record of slaughter must, to be appropriate, tend to improve the methods of killing. Many of the tactical and strategic questions have been discussed as they arose, but there are a few important and several minor matters which may conveniently form the subject of a separate chapter.

Someone, conscious of his own inferiority to the average of the species, has declared that comparisons are odious. They are, however, often instructive. The

British army is employed on every amazing variety of warfare which the peculiarities of savage peoples, the extremes of climate, and the diversity of natural features may present. Experience in one kind is often an actual impediment to the successful conduct of another. The ill-fortune in a recent Indian campaign of an officer who had been distinguished in the Khedive's army, provoked a newspaper to sarcastically remark that 'Frontier warfare was not to be learnt on the playing-fields of Egypt.' The converse, though less witty, would in many cases be not less true. The principle of entrusting commands to officers of local experience has certainly been closely followed of late years. Generals are becoming specialists not only in the art of war, but in the particular style of the countries in which their experience has been gained. Comparison bridges the gap between these different styles of war; displays the difficulties, the dangers, and the opportunities of each: and enables the achievements of one commander to be appreciated relatively to those of others.

No contrast could be more remarkable than that presented by the expeditions to Tirah and Khartoum. Tirah is a cold country of mountains. The Soudan is a hot, flat desert. The enemy, in both cases valiant, Mohammedan, and merciless, are in most other respects as different as their lands. The Afridis are excellent shots, avoid close quarters and regular engagements, and harass and harry continually, particularly after nightfall. The Dervishes disdain to take aim, collect in great armies eager for pitched battles, despise small

affairs, and detest the darkness. I shall elaborate the contrast.

On the 30th of August, when the outpost squadron was withdrawn from Merreh Hill, whence we had been watching the Dervish patrols, I could not help looking over my shoulder in the expectation of seeing the rocky crest crowned with the vengeful smoke-puffs which on the Frontier always occupied an evacuated position. It seemed certain that the Dervishes would gallop up to the hill and begin firing immediately they saw that we had left it. Instead of this they remained idly watching in the plain, and our retreat was unmolested. On the other hand, two days later, when the Lancers wheeled into line for their charge, and I perceived a great mass of Dervishes in the open ground in front, I felt perfectly sure they would all run away, just as the Swatis and Mamunds used to do, and so took good heart; whereas, since they were solid and unflinching, there was really considerable ground for anxiety. This, I think, shows both the diverse character of the enemies and also the perils of a restricted experience.

But, for all the downright pluck of the Dervishes, the Pathan tribesman is the more skilful and dangerous antagonist. In many of their battles the Arabs had the advantage of numbers; but the Afridis and Mamunds always fought against a superior force of civilised troops—a few daring riflemen against a brigade. They understood not only how to use modern rifles, but also how to protect themselves from fire. Knowing the power of their own weapons, they were wary of those of the soldiers. They had no illusions as

to what the result of a general engagement would be. Herein lay their strength. The Dervishes were weak because they thought they were strong. The Afridis were strong because they knew they were weak. The night before Omdurman the great Dervish host might exult in the belief that with the first light of morning they would drive their foes into the Nile. On the eve of Dargai the few hundred Afridis who had gathered, like the Spartans at Thermopylæ, to dispute the invasion of their native land more probably occupied themselves in anxiously discussing the precise moment when they should retire, having inflicted the greatest amount of loss on the soldiers at the smallest cost to themselves. The enduring tenacity of the Pathan, no less than his intelligence, must be arrayed against the senseless heroism of the Dervish. Both Sir William Lockhart and Sir Herbert Kitchener were at the head of sufficient forces; both were anxious to bring about a decisive action. Whereas, however, the Arab was eager to join battle as soon as possible, nothing was further from the intentions of the Afridi. He would run no risk that he could by any means avoid. But when the Dervishes had fought their fight, the war was over. All general resistance collapsed after Omdurman, and the 20,000 unwounded survivors of the Dervish army thought only of flight. But it was not until after Sir William Lockhart had stormed Dargai, and forced the Sempagha and Arhanga passes that the war in Tirah began. The beaten enemy refused to admit their defeat. To the very last, even when their villages were burned, their fields laid waste, their bravest leaders killed, their

women starving in the snows, they maintained an unshaken attitude, and, although they sued for peace, they were yet prepared to continue the struggle with diminished force but undiminished fortitude.

The natural features of the Soudan increased the facilities which the character of its inhabitants offered to a civilised invader. The Sirdar enjoyed the two greatest advantages that a commander can desire—secure and convenient lines of communication; broad and easy lines of advance. As soon as the Desert Railway was built, all difficulties ceased and a continuous line of rail and river stretched from Cairo to Khartoum. For the culminating operation the army was actually enabled to take with it all the necessary supplies, and so be independent even of its excellent communications. Instead of the winding and uneven mountain track, ever threatened by the enterprising enemy and along which the weary mules, ponies, and donkeys might toil, bringing supplies in driblets to the brigades in Tirah, a broad river flowed sure and certain, on whose waters hundreds of large barges, containing tons of stores, could float in safety, protected by the all-powerful gunboats. The strong and prevalent north wind drove the laden flotilla forward; the impetuous current carried the empty vessels back. Both forces were the free gifts of Nature and needed no human labour. In all the history of war no army has had easier lines of communication than the troops who fought at Omdurman.

If the commander was thus fortunate as regards connection with his base, he was no less favoured by

the opportunities of advance towards his goal. One of the most usual difficulties of war is to present a front to the enemy sufficiently broad to enable the full strength of the force to be developed. Armies fight in line, but they generally have to march in columns; and the problem which confronts Generals is to arrange for the swift conversion of the long procession of men, guns, and animals, trailing out along ten and even twenty miles of roadway, into a fighting formation. The danger cannot be always avoided; and military records contain numberless instances of large forces, unable to deploy, being checked or destroyed by small bodies of their enemies. To reduce these difficulties and perils the nicest calculations are necessary. Every yard of road-space must be economised. The length of every regiment in column of route is estimated, and adequate margin for temporary checks is allowed. The moving-off of every unit is carefully timed, so that the fatigues of the troops are reduced to a minimum. On such affairs the Staff of most armies labour incessantly. But the Staff of the army of the Nile had no such tedious business to exhaust them. Instead of a narrow road, there was a highway hundreds of miles broad. The smooth, firm sand of the desert, limited only by the horizon and intersected by the invaluable river alone, enabled the Nile Expeditionary Force to march literally 'in battle array.'

The result of these two paramount advantages was to enable the Staff to be reduced to minute proportions. It is unlikely that any army has ever had so few

magnificent functionaries as that which the Sirdar commanded. The duties of the Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General and of the Deputy-Assistant Quartermaster-General of each brigade were discharged by a single Brigade-Major. Although the six brigades might form three divisions, only two Divisional Staffs existed. The imposing Headquarter Staff shrank to a compact group of three or four General officers and a few subalterns to carry out their orders. The Sirdar himself had only two real Aides-de-Camp,[1] although several ornamental additions appeared before the actions. A single officer,[2] with the title of Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General to the Sirdar, transacted all the business between the British division and the Egyptian army. No daily orders were ever published. Scarcely any written commands were ever given. Everything was done by word of mouth, and much was taken for granted. Whereas the field printing presses of the Tirah Expeditionary Force regularly recorded with pomp and ceremony the events of the day, down to the issue of a pair of boots to a native follower, and carefully prescribed the arrangements for the morrow—and these orders filtered down to the regiments through the Divisional Staffs and the Brigade Staffs, gradually becoming more and more particularised, until finally they were gems of minute thought—the Sirdar would come into camp, as he did at Royan, at about two o'clock in the afternoon

[1] Major J. K. Watson, D.S.O., King's Royal Rifle Corps and Egyptian army, and Major Lord E. H. Cecil, Grenadier Guards.

[2] Captain Sir Henry Rawlinson, Bart., Coldstream Guards.

and say to one of his few Staff officers, 'I think we'll push on another five or six miles,' and thereupon, marvellous to relate, six brigades of infantry, thirteen squadrons, forty guns, a great fleet of boats, and masses of transport would get up and roll forward into a new camp.

I have tried to explain why this was possible in the Soudan. It is unlikely that such a system would work elsewhere. It scarcely seems credible that the intricate arrangements which the experience of centuries of war has induced all Continental armies to devise are mere cumbersome formalities. Even in Egypt it produced difficulties. The Sirdar's Staff were overwhelmed with work, owing to the disregard of the principles of devolution. A General officer anxious to discuss some important matter concerning his brigade and a subaltern wanting transport for a handful of baggage left behind by sick men had equal claims on their time. Despite their indisputable talents and amazing energy some things were bound to suffer, and the whole system of the force necessarily became loose and slipshod. Let us imagine a typical instance. A subaltern is in charge of a few *maunds* of regimental baggage ordered to be sent down the river. He has to go to the Headquarter camp to ask for transport. The important officer to whom he applies is busy with important matters. Perhaps he is compiling the nominal roll of the killed and wounded, already three days late and for which the War Office, excited by frantic relatives, are telegraphing imperiously. After a long delay he receives the subaltern with a worried

and abstracted air. 'Transport? How much? Well, take one of those barges by the bank. Written authority? Oh, ridiculous. That's not *our* style of doing business *here*.' (The officers of the Headquarter staff were not troubled by false modesty.) 'Just go and take one of the barges and float it down to where you want it.' 'Any one?' 'Well, any one that isn't wanted for anything else.' 'But,' inquires the subaltern, 'how am I to know which ones are engaged, and how am I to persuade the officers in charge to let me have one, and how am I to move that great ship without a fatigue party, and how——?' 'Oh,' says the great man, 'how can I tell you? Just look at all the things I have to do. I can't be bothered with your damned transport. Go and do it somehow;' and somehow it was usually done. The subaltern goes down to the barges and finds about twenty, all of which are being loaded by busy soldiers and heated officers. Everybody declares his barge engaged; all protest their own haste and business. At length he meets someone he knows personally, and explains his dilemma. His friend does his best for friendship's sake. By great efforts room is made on the barge. Both officers then go in search of someone who can speak Arabic in order to explain to the *reis*[3] that the barge is to be floated further down stream to pick up more baggage. All this is accomplished at length; the barge is at its proper place and the baggage is on the shore. A fatigue party is now required to load it. Off goes the subaltern to some

[3] The Arab skipper.

Egyptian regiment whose colonel he knows personally. The latter receives him with hospitality. 'Come in and have a drink.' There follows a long discussion on various matters, ending in an appeal for a fatigue party as a personal favour: and as a personal favour, on this occasion only, the fatigue party is granted and the baggage loaded.

Now if, instead of the important officer, there had been a humble subordinate, the subaltern would have explained his business. The subordinate would have written an order to the 'Officer Directing Water Transport,' or whatever his title might have been, as follows: 'Please arrange to load by your fatigue parties four *maunds* of stuff in charge of bearer.' That is a practical way of settling such matters. The other depends entirely on the personal goodwill of different officers. When the sun shines bright and all goes well, it may work with some inconvenience. But in a campaign where everybody is wet and cold, where convoys are intercepted, rations run short, and the enemy keep on shooting and often hit, the 'personal goodwill' of military officers is a very uncertain quantity. The best system would seem to lie midway between the consequential orthodoxy of the Indian and the happy-go-lucky good-fellowship of the Egyptian arrangements.

I have discussed the two great facilities which the Sirdar enjoyed in the last stage of the war. There were others scarcely less important. His flanks were practically unassailable. Throughout the grand advance his left rested on the river, which was unfordable and dominated by gunboats. His right

stretched into the desert, and the Camel Corps scouted far to the flank. To avoid being seen by them, the Dervishes would have had to make an enormous circle of perhaps twenty-five miles' radius. But they could not make a circle of more than ten miles' radius in any numbers, because, once off the river, they must carry their water. There remained only the frontal attack, and to meet such an attack the whole force was able to march in a fighting formation, and, thus formed, was strong enough to beat down all opposition. If the Dervishes had disputed the advance at any point, the gunboats had only to ascend the river and turn their right flank. The ground within range of the river was entirely forbidden to the Arabs by the guns of the steamers, and though in places thick scrub might have afforded cover to skirmishers, no serious resistance was possible. The flanks could not be turned; the advance could not be stopped; the communications could not be touched.

It is impossible to see how the Khalifa could have manœuvred his army successfully. He might have held the Shabluka for a time and inflicted some loss on the turning force. But, once the position was turned, the Arabs holding it would be hopelessly cut off, and their destruction might have demoralised all the rest. After the Shabluka was passed, he could do nothing but harass until the invaders reached the plains of Omdurman. He did not even harass, and therein he was of course at fault. He allowed his enemy to arrive fresh and unshaken; whereas if he had fired into all the camps night after night, and had skirmished in the

scrub every day, we might have had three or four hundred casualties or ever we came to the city. I have elsewhere discussed the chances of a night attack. The attack by daylight was absurd. Had he shut himself up in Omdurman, keeping as far from the river as he could, the troops must have lost heavily in taking the city house by house. But the result was inevitable. Creeping along by the river under cover of his gunboats, the Sirdar could have sidled and edged his force into that part of Omdurman cleared by the bombardment—namely, the river face—and then, with his back to the river, he could have advanced through the city from east to west. The operation would have been certain, though perhaps expensive.

As soon as the railway had reached the Atbara, all was settled. Had the Khalifa been at the head of a civilised army, he would have evacuated Omdurman after the Shabluka was passed, and have retired off the Nile towards El Obeid, thus putting all the gunboats out of action, drawing his enemies away from their safe communications and protected flanks, and exposing them to the ordinary risks of war. But although he doubtless saw the desirability of such a course, he could not carry it out. The abandonment of Omdurman might have been followed by the break-up of his army. The 'well-considered policy of military concentration' did not admit of a change of focus. The Desert Railway sealed his fate; and there is no doubt to whose brain the Desert Railway owed its existence, and consequently the Khalifa his destruction.

The actual tactics of the Dervishes at Omdurman

are worthy of attention. After the action it was a common remark that they were 'quite the old tactics of '84 and '85.' As I was at school in 1885, I have examined this opinion by the light of the experience of others, and it seems scarcely well founded. It is true that there were desperate rushes of gallant men in 1885 and desperate rushes of gallant men in 1898; but there the resemblance ceases.

The whole idea of the modern infantry attack is to get an assaulting column within charging distance of the enemy's position. The very latest principle is to pour in so heavy a fire of infantry and artillery at long range that the enemy dare not put their heads above the trenches to aim. Then, while their fire is wild and unaimed, the advance begins. The columns of assault move steadily forward, preceded by a solid line of men who fire continually while they advance, and so keep the enemy pinned under their cover. Of course the attack will suffer heavily from the unaimed fire of men who put their rifles over the parapets and pull the triggers; but if the assaulting infantry keep a ceaseless hail of bullets whizzing overhead, very few of the defenders will dare to take aim, unless the attacking troops stop firing, in which case they will make up for lost time, and the assaulting columns will be swept away, even while they are cheering and preparing to charge to victory.

In 1885 the Dervishes appeared to have a very fair conception of these principles. On many occasions, including Abu Klea and Abu Kru, they formed only two, and sometimes only one column of spearmen. A

long line of riflemen gradually enveloped the square or position and kept down its fire, or at any rate engaged its attention from a range of not less than 700 yards. Then, when the best moment had apparently arrived, the assaulting columns rushed in. If the assault failed, the whole force retired, the riflemen drawing off with the *débris* of the spearmen.

Let us compare these tactics with those employed at Omdurman. The spearmen and riflemen seemed to be mixed, and were not separate units. The spearmen commenced to rush as soon as they saw their enemy, and brought on their riflemen with them. When the rush was over and the attack practically repulsed, the riflemen who had been carried on by the assault lay down and opened fire. What was the good of that? They might kill and wound a few soldiers, but it was a useless slaughter, since they were not preparing the way for an attack. In 1885 the tactics of the Arabs were very instructive. In 1898 they were imbecile and hopeless. The explanation of the change is very simple. All the great leaders who had been called forth by the enthusiasm of the Mahdist movement—like Wad-el-Nejumi, Abu Anga, and Zeki Tummal—had been killed in battle, had died, or had been executed by the Khalifa. There was a bitter truth in the taunt which Zeki Tummal flung at Yakub, who had worked his ruin and was about to have him slain: 'After my death you will try to find men like me to take my place, and you will not find them.'[4]

Scarcely any technical question, arising out of the

[4] Slatin, *Fire and Sword*, p. 501.

operations, has been more vigorously debated than whether the *zeriba* in front of the British division during the first part of the action at Omdurman was a wise precaution or a great mistake. Those who disapprove of the *zeriba* declare that it was so thin and weak that it would have been no impediment to an enemy; that the troops behind it had to stand up to fire even at the longest range, so that their fire could not have been as well aimed as if they had lain down; that its long black line, streaked across the brown plain, afforded a clear and definite target to the enemy; that the standing men were more exposed than if they had been lying down; that it afforded no cover from fire; and that the Soudanese wisely dug a shelter trench, which possessed none of these disadvantages.

Its advocates, though in a minority in respect of numbers, boast a wider experience and, I think, meet this formidable argument with a tolerably complete reply. They contend that the moral effect of the *zeriba* on the men standing behind it was admirable; that at night this effect would have been enhanced; that if the troops had lain down they could not have had a clear view, owing to the gentle swells and creases of the ground; that their fire standing was sufficiently accurate; that, according to 'Hythe statistics,' a man standing is no more vulnerable at the longer ranges than a man lying down, because, to reach so far, the bullets must have been shot high into the air, and hence are falling at an angle of about 45°; that these same too often despised 'Hythe statistics' were signally verified by the fact that during the *zeriba* phase of the action Wauchope's

brigade standing up behind a *zeriba*, and Maxwell's brigade lying down behind a shelter trench, lost exactly the same number of men; and finally that the only reason the Soudanese brigades did not make a *zeriba* was that there were no bushes near their front.

I do not expect I shall bias the military reader's judgment when I place myself on the side of the opponents of the *zeriba*. There is very little in the history of *zeribas* to encourage their adoption. His *zeriba* did not save Yusef Pasha. His *zeriba* did not benefit Mahmud. On the other hand, I have seen shelter trenches used on the Indian Frontier with great effect. If the ditch be made toward the enemy, the defender, standing on the higher ground, has a powerful advantage should the assault end in hand-to-hand fighting; and in the searching rifle fire which invariably preceded the Pathan charge, there are few men and no wise ones who would rather be behind a hedge than behind a bank. In the majority of cases, however, the commander has no choice, for either there are no bushes, when he must dig a trench; or the ground is too hard, and he must make a *zeriba*. When both courses are excluded, as in Tirah, it will usually be possible to build a low wall of rough stones.[5] But all authorities are agreed that in a savage country some sort of obstacle must protect the troops at night, strengthen their confidence, and give them a line to rally on, should they be suddenly attacked. If this obstacle be a *zeriba*, it is of vital importance that it should not be more than four feet

[5] Called in India a *sungar*.

high. Although it can be fired *through*, the natural impulse of the soldiers will be to fire at its top or over it; and if the fence is too high, the fire will be too high.

The equipment of the British infantry in the final campaign on the Nile was of the most modern pattern, and it is difficult to see at present in what direction there lies room for any great improvement. Neither the bullet scandal nor the boot scandal had been without their lessons. The new Hythe bullet which was used by the British Division answered its purpose. It differs from the Dum-Dum bullet in that it has a small conical depression in its tip, whereas the Indian bullet has its outer envelope drawn slightly back so as to expose the soft core. The latter is supposed to excel in shattering power; the former in accuracy at long ranges. The results of either are from the shooter's point of view sufficiently good, and from any other sufficiently ghastly. I hold that it is entirely legitimate to use such a missile in savage warfare. Nearly all civilised soldiers sit down when they are severely wounded. Perhaps one per cent. struggle heroically on. That is not enough to make any difference. But barbarous peoples, less sensitive or more valiant, require to be hopelessly disabled before they admit their injury, and in the meanwhile they give no quarter.

The paramount and sacred law of self-preservation justifies the employment of a man-stopping bullet. When the late Colonel Burnaby used a shot-gun to defend himself at El Teb, his act was condemned as brutal. It appears to me most sensible and correct. It

is a vile and abominable action to kill the wounded, and the man who has done such a thing, except to protect his own life from imminent peril, must bear a heavy load to the grave and perhaps beyond. But the living, fighting enemy is fair game, and may be killed by any means except those excluded by a recognised contract *with him*—not with civilised nations of whom he knows nothing, and whose counter-engagements he does not observe—and except by means which savour of treachery. After all, no wounds are more appalling than those caused by splinters of shell, a projectile whose legitimacy has never been challenged.

The superiority of the Lee-Metford to the Martini-Henry rifle was again strikingly demonstrated. During the first attack at Omdurman the 1st British and 2nd Soudanese brigades were side by side. In front of the British, armed with the Lee-Metford, the attack was stopped at 800 yards; in front of the Soudanese, armed with the Martini, it was not arrested until within 300 yards. It is, of course, true that the steady British infantry shot better than the wild Soudanese. But the contrast remains tremendous. To send into action, against troops armed with the small-bore magazine rifles in universal use in Europe, soldiers armed only with the obsolete weapon would be to send them to a hopeless massacre. Such is the fate at this moment reserved for the native army of India should they ever have to encounter the Russians.

It may be worth while to state the argument in favour of re-arming the native regiments with a small-bore rifle. First of all, the native army would become

a far more formidable fighting machine, and the Empire be consequently strengthened. Secondly, the regular mixed brigades would use only one kind of ammunition—an inestimable advantage. Thirdly, the Government might display their implicit confidence in their loyal native subjects. 'Nonsense!' the brutal cynic will remark; 'it would not be safe to arm the natives with as good weapons as the British soldiers.' But in this instance it would be actually safer than the present system. Anyone can make gunpowder. No Asiatic is likely to learn to make cordite or solid-drawn cartridge-cases. There are vast stores of gunpowder in India, but all cordite is in the Government magazines. Without cordite ammunition the small-bore rifle is useless. Therefore distribute the small-bore rifle and regulate the issue of ammunition; and then the Sepoys will be armed with a weapon which is powerful when used against the foreign foe, powerless if employed against a paternal Government.

The Egyptian helmet for officers is in every respect superior to the Indian pattern. It protects the face from the sun, shades the eyes, and does not tilt forward, should the wearer require to shoot. It is not, however, so elegant. In the recent campaign in India the disadvantages of the regulation helmet were so remarkable that a great many officers bought themselves ordinary solar *topees*. This produced a most unmilitary effect. The adoption of the Egyptian pattern is dictated alike by sense and sentiment. The puggaree on officers' and soldiers' helmets is a useless encumbrance which adds more to weight than beauty.

I have alluded elsewhere [6] to the thick buff belts and pouches with which the British infantry are afflicted. The adoption of web, or at any rate of harness leather, is strongly to be desired. The cavalry canteen is an inconvenient vessel; the small South African 'billy' is immeasurably superior. Both officers of the 7th Hussars who were attached to the 21st Lancers used the latter, and its advantages were evident to all. But these are very little things; and neither are they very numerous.

The first matter connected with the cavalry in the Nile campaign which I would discuss is so technical that the reader who is not a soldier will not understand it, and I recommend him to avoid the whole four paragraphs which follow.

When the 21st Lancers arrived at Wad Hamed they were formed as a regiment of three squadrons, each nearly 130 strong. An extraordinary operation then took place which I commend to the notice of all cavalry theorists. Out of the three squadrons Colonel Martin proceeded to form four. The method was as follows:—One of the four troops was taken from each of the three squadrons and formed into a new and separate squadron, making a regiment of four squadrons of three troops each, instead of a regiment of three squadrons of four troops each. Then one section was taken from each of the three troops of every squadron and formed into a fourth troop for each squadron, making four squadrons of four troops of three sections each. Then the three sections of each troop were told

[6] *The Story of the Malakand Field Force*, 1897.

off afresh as four sections. Thus a cavalry regiment of three squadrons of four troops each became a cavalry regiment of four squadrons of four troops each. This took place five days before the regiment was actually in contact with the enemy.

It will not be denied by any who have studied modern military principles, that this was a revolution of everything that has been preached and accepted for years. The great idea that the men should know their places in the ranks, that they should know their troop officer, that he should know them and his horses—in fact, the whole troop system was thrown overboard. More than this, the celebrated squadron system was made to walk the plank. It is indisputable that the 21st Lancers acquitted themselves admirably in the reconnaissance and action which followed their kaleidoscopic reorganisation. But if the campaign had been one of months instead of days, and if the men had been made to endure as well as to dare, or to meet disciplined cavalry in shock tactics, it is not possible to believe that the change would have been found wise or profitable.

There is usually a reason for human actions, however strange, and in this case there were several. Squadrons of 130 men are unwieldy. Four squadrons make a better fighting regimental unit than three. Lancer regiments require a strong front rank for charging, in order that as many as possible may use their lances. But the true reason was this:—The Sirdar had said that he wanted a regiment of four squadrons, and rather than run the risk of being left

behind the 21st Lancers would have formed forty. Colonel Martin had no choice.

I now arrive at the conclusion to which the incident points. If the peace system of three field squadrons and a depôt squadron—one of the legacies of Sir George Luck—is unsuited to war, and is going to be changed on active service to four field squadrons, the sooner the ridiculous peace system, unsuited to war, is done away with the better. And if the peace system is a good one and suited to war, then all officers should be strictly forbidden to depart from it under any circumstances. Unless one or other of these courses is followed, the principles of troop and squadron leading which have been admitted for so long and are being carried to greater lengths every year, will be utterly abandoned, and regiments will prepare themselves for active service by such an appalling internal convulsion as I have described—I fear, at wearisome length.

The part played by the cavalry throughout the war was important. The smooth, flat country enabled them to be handled in considerable bodies, and not only to reconnoitre boldly in all directions, but also to play an imposing part in the regular engagements. The reader will recall many instances which are described in this account. The cavalry fight at Akasha, the repeated reconnaissances before Firket, the pursuit after that action, the patrol to Salamat, the reconnaissance in force before the attack on Mahmud's *zeriba*, the use made of the cavalry in the battle, the ceaseless scouting and outposts preliminary to the grand advance were all essential operations. But the concluding

campaign saw the fullest employment of cavalry for many years. All through the advance the thirteen squadrons, aided by the Camel Corps and supported by the Horse Battery, searched the country, making a great screen ten miles in front of the army, behind which the infantry marched safe and secure. It was said that the force arrived at Kerreri earlier than the Khalifa expected. If that be true, it would seem largely due to the efficient screening by which the cavalry covered the advance. Finally, in the battle of Omdurman the mounted forces sustained half the losses of the whole army—a fact which shows how much they were used. But it is indisputable that the proportion of cavalry to the other arms was too small; that the horses were worked to death; and that much of the effect of the victory was lost through the numerical weakness of the mounted arm.

It is here convenient to allude to the Horse Artillery. Only one Egyptian battery was used in the war. It was of some service during the reconnaissance of Mahmud's *zeriba*, and in the retirement that followed. But the small Arab horses, although eight were harnessed to each gun, were unable to keep up with the cavalry in the heavy sand or rough ground, and in the early part of the action at Omdurman the battery compromised the cavalry, and might very easily have compelled a charge which would have been attended by severe loss.

It is doubtful whether one battery is any advantage to a brigade of cavalry. Its fire-power is not formidable. It is an encumbrance to the squadrons, and

a constant source of anxiety to the Brigadier. I do not now discuss the advantages of Horse Artillery employed in brigade divisions, but most cavalry commanders would willingly exchange a single detached battery for two extra squadrons. The experience of the 2nd of September tends to justify their preference.[7]

Cavalry will find an invaluable ally in the galloping Maxim gun. The reader who will look back to the plan of the charge of the 21st Lancers * will easily understand what help such a weapon might have afforded us if, under a quick and skilful officer, it had been brought into action on the left flank and had swept the *khor* with an accurate and terrible fire as soon as the charge had passed through the Dervish line. At intervals during that day I heard officers exclaim regretfully, 'Oh, if we had only had a Maxim!' The Egyptian cavalry at Omdurman were seriously weakened by being deprived of the services of their two galloping Maxims. The Sirdar required them for the *zeriba*, and Colonel Broadwood and his officers were acutely conscious of the very great loss of power they consequently suffered. Few who have served with the cavalry in Egypt will disagree with the opinion I unhesitatingly express, that every cavalry regiment should have two Maxim guns of its own.

I have elsewhere examined the charge of the 21st Lancers as concerns that regiment. It will be useful to consider its lessons to cavalry in general.

[7] It is fair to remember that the gun with which this particular Horse battery was armed (an antiquated Krupp) was a most indifferent weapon, that the shells were worse, and the fuses worst of all.—EDITOR.

* See plan, to face page 144.

The first conclusion is agreeable to the horsemen. The belief which largely prevails, that horses will not face spears or bayonets—will not, in fact, jump into a formed mass of infantry—is quite unwarranted. It is true that the French Cuirassiers at Waterloo could not make their horses break into the British squares, but this is probably explained by the fact that their charges were mostly delivered *at a walk*. At any rate, the horses on the 2nd of September, ridden at full gallop, did actually jump into the enemy's mass, and knocked the Dervishes over in dozens. What followed is not so pleasing. The trooper is always encouraged in the idea that if ever cavalry can get among infantry the latter will be cut to pieces forthwith.[8] But this did not appear to be the case at Omdurman. In spite of the deliberate hand-to-hand fighting which was indulged in on the further side of the *khor*, the enemy left no more than thirty-five dead or badly wounded on the ground.

At this point the question of Lance *v.* Sword thrusts itself before the student. I left the Indian Frontier an enthusiastic admirer of the lance; Egypt shook my convictions. It must be remembered of the 21st Lancers that their men were really Hussars, armed only lately with lances. They had not been brought up to the weapon. They knew their lance drill, but they hankered for the sword. The points of the lances had become shockingly blunted on the march. The Der-

[8] See the account of the destruction of the 69th Regiment by Kellerman's Cuirassiers at Quatre Bras.—Sir Evelyn Wood, *Cavalry in the Waterloo Campaign.*

vishes were wrapped all round with swathes of linen; some of the Emirs wore chain armour. After the charge was over, several of the troopers loudly complained that their points would not pierce the enemy, but only push them over. The crowded nature of the scrimmage prevented the lances being used with effect. When a trooper had transfixed his adversary, the other Dervishes caught hold of the weapon and twisted it out of the horseman's hand. Then they cut at him from all sides. In such circumstances the sword was the better defence. The enemy's cuts could be guarded, and the trooper, by laying lustily about him, might have cleared a road. It is, however, very rarely in modern warfare that men come to such close fighting, and in the actual shock of an ordinary charge against cavalry or in a pursuit the lance is the better arm.

There is, however, another weapon which is far more effective than either lance or sword. The pistol —and by 'pistol' I desire to include revolver—is incomparably more terrible than any *arme blanche*. The officers of the 19th Hussars, who were continuously campaigning in Egypt and the Soudan from 1882 to 1885, discovered that the man who carried a revolver might come safely through a charge where good swordsmen were cut down. From one of them I learned many useful details of Arab fighting, but no precept was more forcibly urged than that the officer should charge with a revolver, not a sword. I resolved accordingly. On arrival at Wad Hamed I discussed the question with several officers of the Egyptian

cavalry. Nearly all were in favour of the pistol. They said that the Dervishes were not eager to attack a horseman so armed, and would prefer to select other antagonists. I therefore followed my original intention at Omdurman—with most satisfactory results so far as I was concerned. Only one other officer charged with a revolver.[9] He was the only officer who had ever ridden in a charge before. Like myself, he was unharmed. If we had charged back again, there would have been many more revolvers drawn.

The reason in this particular instance is not difficult to perceive. The Arabs are naturally swordsmen and spearmen. When they see an enemy approaching who is armed with sword or lance they are delighted, and ask for nothing better than a personal combat. As three or four of them usually select the same individual at once, his position is one of difficulty. A man with a pistol is far more formidable. His handy weapon is pointed now at one enemy, now at another. A sword-cut may be comparatively harmless, or it may be guarded. But who can parry a bullet? The Dervishes tried to stop the horses by seizing the reins. No man living would dare to attempt such an enterprise, if he knew that he would be fired at with a pistol at, let us say, six inches' range. Again, if a man be wounded, he may be too weak to use his sword. His feeble strokes would be futile. But if he carry a revolver, he has only to pull the trigger.

Now, if the revolver is a better weapon than sword or lance, the question at once arises, Why should it be

[9] Lieut.-Colonel H. Finn, 21st Lancers.

confined to officers? Why should not whole regiments be armed with revolvers, charge with revolvers, fire a volley just before the shock, and then single out and shoot down their own adversaries? I do not doubt that the proposition will excite amusement. It will be said that the troopers, getting flurried, would shoot each other. That is very likely. A certain loss of life is inseparable from war, and it makes little difference whether a man is shot by his own side or cut down by the other. But even the rawest recruit in the moment of extreme agitation has a distinct preference for shooting his enemies rather than his friends; and as for random shots, they may hit either side indiscriminately. It will also be urged that cold steel is the characteristic of the cavalryman. Such a contention is purely sentimental. It is probable that the Yeomen of England finally abandoned the long-bow for the musket with grave misgivings. Of course it is true that the first weapon of the cavalryman is his horse; and it will be said that if men were armed with pistols, they would not ride home. That is an objection which remains to be proved. There are doubtless other objections. But the advantages are great. The meeting of cavalry squadrons would become far more terrible. The deadly pistol would have taken the place of the comparatively harmless, ornamental sword. Were a squadron armed with revolvers to charge a squadron armed with swords, the former might lose ten men from their own fire; the other would be practically destroyed. Several instances of this occurred in the American Civil War. In every case

the Confederates, armed with revolvers, almost annihilated the Northerners, who used swords.[10]

The change would be so sweeping that I hesitate to advocate it. If the advantage of the pistol be admitted, it is enhanced to us by the fact that we can teach our seven-year soldiers to use it properly, while foreign conscripts could not possibly learn it in three years. It is a matter which cavalry officers should think over without prejudices of any kind. There are many who have already begun to do so.[11] It will be brought before them with increasing urgency, for, as the years go by, firearms are continually improving, and the sword stands still for ever. The day may come when the civilised warrior will finally abandon the weapons of the savage and adopt the machines of science. It will appear no less ridiculous to carry a long knife to the battlefield wherewith to carve and transfix the enemy, than it would now seem for a Grenadier to be armed, like David, with a sling and five smooth stones. But perhaps before that enlightened age is reached,

[10] 'A fight took place in Virginia in November, 1864, between a squadron of Mosby's Confederate partisan cavalry under Major Richards and a squadron of Federal cavalry under Captain Blazer. After a sharp hand-to-hand fight, in which the Confederates used the revolver solely, the Federal squadron was completely defeated. The casualties were, on the Southern side, only one man killed and several wounded; but so deadly was the effect of the revolver that Blazer's loss was twenty-four killed, twelve wounded, and sixty-two prisoners and horses . . . . out of 100 men' (Lieutenant-Colonel G. T. Denison, *A History of Cavalry*). The reader who is tempted to scoff at the considerations set forth above should read the thirty-second chapter of the volume here quoted. I had not read it until after the present remarks were written. The similarity of the passages is striking.

[11] In writing the remarks on this subject I have been greatly assisted by the knowledge and experience of Lieutenant-Colonel Hon. F. Eveleigh de Moleyns, D.S.O., 4th Hussars.

men will have realised that human dignity will scarcely allow them to indulge their tastes for the barbarous, though exhilarating, sport of war.

Among the more recent improvements in firearms none should attract more attention than the invention of the magazine pistol. Several kinds are already in the market, and all possess in varying degrees the same advantages. Perhaps the best and the best-known is the Mauser pattern. I write as almost the only British officer who has used this weapon in actual war. Its superiority to the revolver is plain. It fires ten rounds, whereas the revolver fires but six. It is sighted to 1,000 yards, and shoots effectively to 800. The revolver is never of any use beyond fifty yards, although its bullet carries much farther. The pistol is self-loading, self-cocking, self-ejecting. Its rate of fire is as fast as the trigger can be pulled. Its muzzle velocity is almost double that of the older weapon. It can be re-charged with ten rounds on a clip almost as quickly as a single cartridge can be loaded into a revolver. By a cunning arrangement the recoil is utilised to eject, cock, and re-load; so that the hand remains steady while successive shots are fired. It is cheaper and lighter. Finally, it is furnished with a case of light wood instead of leather, and this fits into the pistol-butt, making a handy and accurate carbine. In spite of all these complications, the weapon did not get out of order in a country where the desert sand affects all machinery.[12]

[12] Compare such a weapon with the old horse-pistol. 'The flint-lock horse-pistol had a very short range. . . . It was, in fact, comparatively worthless, for the shaking of the horse was apt to derange the powder in the pan, or the flint might miss fire, or the fire not reach the powder; and

This is not a prospectus: nor shall I disguise the disadvantage. It does not fire a sufficiently heavy bullet. Although the small projectile with its expansive tip and high velocity has shattered bones into splinters, there is greater safety in a larger bore. It is, however, so much easier to shoot with the Mauser pistol than with the revolver, that even this objection is modified, for it is better to hit with a small bullet than to miss with a big one: and when a weapon is made on the same principle and on a larger scale, the revolver will follow the arquebus into the museums of ancient arms; and who shall say that the magazine pistol with its carbine fitting will not oust the trooper's sword as well as the officer's revolver?

I approach the subject of the effects of the 'scientific arm' with some misgivings. The unmilitary reader may have hitherto been content to regard all missiles discharged by the artillery impartially as 'shells.' I must adventure an elaboration of this idea. The soldier may pardon a brief explanation for the benefit of those less learned than he. The batteries engaged at Omdurman fired four kinds of projectiles—shrapnel shell, common shell, Lyddite shell, and case-shot. The last—the simplest and the least used—is merely a thin metal box of bullets. When the gun is fired, the box breaks up and the bullets are scattered over the ground for four or five hundred yards in front. This is used only at the shortest ranges; it will reach no farther. A *common*

even when it did go off, the chances were that the ball had shaken out, and, if not, that it would not carry straight.'—Lieutenant-Colonel G. T. Denison, *A History of Cavalry*.

shell is a thick iron box filled with gunpowder and fitted with a fuse arrangement. When the gun is fired the box is flung into the enemy's ranks or defences, and there is burst by its fuse. It kills and wounds by the force of its explosive gases and also by the fragments of the box. When, instead of ordinary gunpowder, the common shell is filled with a high explosive manufactured at Lydd, in Kent, it becomes a *Lyddite shell.* The *shrapnel shell* is the most frequently used. It is designed solely to kill men, nor does it aspire to smash buildings or dismount guns. It consists of a thin metal box full of bullets, but containing also a small charge of powder and a fuse arrangement. When the whole machine has nearly reached the enemy's line, the fuse explodes the powder, breaks up the box, and releases the bullets, which fly onward in a shower impelled only by their acquired momentum. The result is that a large area of ground is plentifully besprinkled with bullets which are often as deadly as the old musket-ball.

The effect of case-shot has often been demonstrated. It is identical with the old-fashioned canister. About 150 of these were fired during the action by the three Egyptian batteries attached to MacDonald's brigade. The results were, as usual, excellent. It swept the ground. The Lyddite shells were fired by the Howitzer Battery into Omdurman, and particularly at the Mahdi's Tomb. The effects were disappointing to those who had attached great faith to the power of the new compound. The dome of the Mahdi's Tomb was still solid after it had been shelled for four hours, although several holes were smashed in

it and the apex was blunted. It was built of brick, and was about three feet in thickness; so that there can be no doubt that the shells were duly burst by the impact.

The question of the shrapnel is far more controversial. It has been asserted that the battle of Omdurman was won by the artillery, and that it was essentially 'a gunner's day.' In that their targets were excellent, their shooting accurate, and their expenditure of ammunition enormous, the latter statement is true. But the former must be strongly controverted. Certainly a great many Dervishes were killed by the artillery, but they did not amount to more than twenty-five per cent. of the total slain. The batteries opened at 3,300 yards' range, and began to hit at once. Nevertheless the frontal attack came steadily on without pause of any kind until it reached the effective musketry zone, when it withered immediately. Of course the artillery contributed materially to checking the enemy, particularly during the attack on MacDonald; but the following statements will not, I think, be contradicted even by artillery officers. Had there been no infantry on the field, there would not have been a gunner left alive by 7 A.M. Had there been no artillery on the field, although the Dervishes might have got a little closer and the loss of the troops might have been a little heavier, the fate of the first attack would have been precisely the same.

The modern improvements in gunnery have been tremendous. It is no exaggeration to say that the artillery which fired at Omdurman was as far superior to that used at Sedan, as the artillery at Sedan was superior to

the cannons which the bullocks dragged to the battle of Blenheim. But the power of artillery is not overwhelming. The rifle has more than kept pace with the gun in its developement. At Waterloo a musket would scarcely kill beyond 100 yards, and field-guns discharged grape effectively at half a mile. Now the gunner can shoot as far as he can see to aim. But so can the infantry soldier. There is now equality, where formerly the artillery had the advantage.

I have looked at the question in its purely physical aspect. The great moral effect of artillery on European troops has been proved many times. The Dervishes, however, were unimpressionable. They went on until they saw that they were too few to carry their attack to a conclusion or till they were shot down. It must also be remembered that artillery is essentially an offensive weapon. The terrible power of guns depends on their being concentrated on some particular point. But at Omdurman the Arabs attacked all along the front, and the artillery fire, instead of being concentrated, was dispersed.

The artillery at Omdurman displayed one capacity which has been overlooked even by their most sanguine admirers, their searching power. I have described the systematic manner in which the front of the *zeriba* was cleared of the Dervish sharpshooters after the failure of the first attack. Although the infantry had concentrated a very heavy fire on one particular line of riflemen, they held tenaciously to their cover and continued to annoy the whole face of the *zeriba*. But on one of the Egyptian 9-pounder Maxim-Nordenfeldt

batteries opening on them, they all rose up—to the number of about 200—and fled, before the battery had fired more than one round per gun. 'After this,' an officer of distinguished reputation and varied experience, who witnessed this exhibition, said to me, 'I cannot believe in the possibility of shelter-trenches being held under artillery fire.'

The results of the Maxim guns used in line with the infantry were thoroughly satisfactory. At the same time it is easy to over-estimate the power of these weapons. At Omdurman, as in every other battle, the killing was done, not by the artillery, nor by the cavalry, nor by the Maxim guns, but by the continued fire of great numbers of infantry. The six Maxim guns of the 1st British Brigade fired on the average 4,000 rounds each; the four of the 2nd Brigade about 2,500 rounds each, giving a general average for the eight guns with the British division of 3,400 rounds per gun. The greater part of the infantry in the firing-line fired upwards of 60 rounds per man. Therefore a company of infantry sixty strong may be said to have been equal in fire-power to a Maxim gun—although, of course, the advantage in respect of accuracy must lie with the machine.

The use of the Maxims at Omdurman displayed several interesting features. Until the later campaigns of the River War, Maxim guns had hardly ever been used in batteries, although this employment is recommended by the 'Infantry Drill.'[13] The massing together of four or eight of these formidable engines multiplies their

[13] Page 118.

effect. The desert sand—which had in former campaigns assailed the machinery of the Nordenfeldt and Gardner guns, and on several critical occasions caused them to jam—was powerless to affect the invincible Maxim. The very greatest precautions were taken. The mechanism was kept carefully covered up at all times, on the march or in camp. The frictional parts were wiped daily with a clean dry rag, and no oil of any description was used. Thus the Maxims came into action. But, once they were on the actual field, the coverings were removed and the whole machine was smothered in oil. Of twenty Maxim guns in action on the field on the 2nd of September, besides those mounted on the gunboats, none jammed through grit.

The sights of the guns were hardly ever used to aim by; a more practical method commended itself. The officer would estimate the approximate range, and open fire a couple of hundred yards short of it. Then he would work quickly up to his target, exactly as if he held a hose, and guided by the dust which flew up as the stream of bullets struck the ground. When he had arrived at the bobbing, white figures, the lateral movement would begin. The belt on which the cartridges are fixed was hardly ever pulled out of the breech while the guns were changing position, and they were thus enabled to open fire at any moment. To gain this advantage the lids of the limber boxes, which act as shields, were kept only half raised, and the gunners consequently got less cover from the enemy's bullets; but, of course, they did not mind that.

Only in one respect are Maxim guns inferior to artillery; they cannot shoot so far. But this is only because they are constructed to take the same ammunition as the rifle. If a Maxim gun were made with slightly increased calibre, it would acquire the necessary increase of range. It seems a clumsy arrangement to use a heavy gun to send shrapnel bullets to their destination, packed in an inconvenient shell-envelope which must be opened at the right time by a complicated and uncertain fuse, when they might be discharged one by one in streams by much lighter and handier machine guns. Perhaps by such a road we might find our way to the true field 'quick-firer,' which will never be arrived at on the lines now being followed. What a mistake artillery officers made by refusing in the first instance to have anything to do with machine guns! It may not yet be too late to repair the error.[14]

I have thus briefly alluded to the employment and effect of all the arms used in the River War; nor is it without some feeling of relief that I turn from the means of killing men to the methods of feeding, healing, and rewarding them. But the reader will remark perhaps with a sigh, that while the machinery of destruction is carried as near to perfection as our science will allow, the systems which are concerned

[14] Of course it must not be forgotten that the convenience in ranging afforded by the desert sand in the Soudan was a local condition. This chapter only aims at recording the impressions produced by the River War. It does not pretend to embrace all considerations, or to look at the military questions discussed from more than a local point of view.

with the more merciful functions of war scarcely show the application of so much energy and talent. The rations issued to the troops, however, were of a very excellent quality, and the unequalled waterway afforded every facility for a regular and abundant supply. It is now generally conceded that officers on active service require better food than their soldiers—because, firstly, they are expected to maintain a higher standard of smartness and zeal; and, secondly, because they are accustomed to better food in time of peace. It is recognised now as a very poor economy to unnecessarily subject the officer to the same conditions as the men. He is a very valuable but delicate creature. The question, like nearly every other question, is one of degree, and it is evident that between pampered officers exciting the indignant envy of their soldiers on the one hand, and emaciated officers breaking down on all occasions through a coarse fare and rigorously undergoing needless hardships on the other, there is a wide space in which sensible people may exercise their discretion. General Gatacre—trained in the practical Indian school—from the very first encouraged his officers to form good messes, and did not attempt to make them live on their rations. The results of this wise policy were that, while the efficiency of the brigade was remarkable, no single officer during the spring campaign died from sickness. But, although the principle is now formally recognised both in India and Egypt, the officers of the regiments employed in the East display far more intelligence in availing themselves of it than did those of the Nile Expeditionary Force.

I do not allude to the officers serving with the Egyptian army. Like those of the Punjaub Frontier Force, they have learnt by long experience how to campaign without discomfort.

The officers of the British regiments, in spite of all the advantages they enjoyed in the matter of transport, managed indifferently. Many ridiculous mistakes were made. One mess equipped itself with several camel-loads of Rosbach water in bottles. Of course, in two days all this was consumed, and the camels which might have carried other urgently needed stores walked idle and unloaded. Many regiments who were short of brandy and whiskey had large supplies of bottled beer. Luxuries abounded when necessities were absent. On one occasion the officers of a distinguished regiment had to dine exclusively on preserved peaches, of which there was a surfeit. On another a captain in charge of a boat-load of troops found that the box of rations with which his regimental mess had provided him contained nothing but ink and candles. On these, and such rations as his company could spare, he had perforce to exist for a week.

It will be apparent that even this small department of human action has principles of its own. First of all, regiments going on service should clearly recognise that they must use the water of the country to drink, and must try and make that water pure, agreeable, and flavoured by the materials they take with them. They cannot carry drinks in bulk. All such things as bottled beer, bottled soda-water, &c., must be remorselessly excluded. But good filters, a soda-water machine, whiskey, brandy, and lime-juice will enable

the water of the country to be made quite drinkable. If, instead of loading up six camels with Rosbach water in bottles, the distinguished regiment had carried a small soda-water machine they could have made as much of the Nile into soda-water as they wanted, and would have had besides four camels to carry other things—for a soda-water machine of the Indian pattern can be easily carried by two camels.

Since the cost of the transport of any commodity to the front is usually much greater than its original value, and since officers never live so cheaply as on active service, whatever tinned food is taken should be of the very best that money can buy. Less by weight need then be taken, since the nourishing qualities are greater. Lastly, all messes should endeavour to carry a tent. This was always done in India, even when troops moved on the 80-lb. scale—a far more severe scale than that necessary in the Omdurman campaign. In tropical countries, where the sun draws the life and strength out of the white man, shelter from the burning rays is a precious boon at the end of the march. It is a boon which two camels carrying a fly-tent can easily confer.

The arrangements for the care of the wounded after the action on the Atbara have already been discussed. In consequence of the numerous complaints which were made during the summer, the number of medical officers with the force was largely increased and great quantities of medical stores were accumulated at the front. But in spite of these precautions the arrangements at the battle of Omdurman were bad. I do not propose to go into details. The reader will find

the grounds of complaint stated moderately, and I do not think unfairly, in a letter written to the 'British Medical Journal' of the 12th of November 1898, by an anonymous critic, who appeared fully conversant with the facts. The controversial tone of this letter drew forth an equally bitter and also anonymous reply, which was published in the same organ on the 24th of December. The reader who is interested in the question may thus study both sides. It is indisputable that lack was shown both of forethought and intelligence; but two important facts must not be forgotten—the great difficulties caused by the military situation between 9 and 11 A.M. on the 2nd of September; and the patience, tenderness, and devotion displayed under most vexing circumstances by the officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps.

The full lists of commendations[15] and rewards[16] are also appended, but I do not mean to leave the subject without some examination of the system and methods by which they are bestowed. The fountain of honour is of notoriously uncertain flow. There are occasions when it throws abundant waters high into the air, and all the crowd are bathed in the invigorating flood. There are other seasons when a solitary jet, passing over expectant heads, strikes some obscure individual standing afar off, to his own intense astonishment no less than of those who have watched his actions. And there are also periods, less frequent as the years go by, when the spout gives forth nothing —not even to those who suck assiduously. Sometimes many who deserve a drink go thirsty. At others the

[15] Appendix B. [16] Appendix C.

waters overflow and run unregarded in the gutters or are greedily swallowed by unworthy humbugs. The quality of the spring, no less than its quantity, is variable. At times a draught is a priceless elixir; at others it is so dilute that wise men disdain such tasteless stuff, and only the vulgar drink by quarts.

The men who managed the reconquest of the Soudan were from the very first determined that, although the ancient Egyptians compelled the Israelites to make bricks without straw, their descendants should not persuade British officers to make war without medals. Ever since that memorable morning when Alexandria was bombarded, 'two at a time' has been the undeviating rule in Egypt in respect of the distribution of decorations. Besides two of Her Majesty's medals there have been scattered with open-handed profusion a Khedivial medal, a Khedivial star, and two vice-regal orders, the Mejidie and the Osmanieh. So general was the possession of these last-named orders that a Cairo tailor scarcely thought it necessary to inquire of the young officer who joined the Egyptian army whether he should add to the uniform he was making 'the usual decorations.' When I reached the Expeditionary Force, I was amazed to see what great numbers of officers and soldiers were decked out with five medals and orders apiece. The irreverent British soldier, watching the bright-coloured ribbons which adorned so many breasts, was provoked to exclaim: 'There goes another peacock!' A schoolboy, hearing some gallant officer remark that he had 'a complete set of Egyptians,' might imagine that he spoke

of postage-stamps. In such universal distinction I recalled the story of the bishop who suggested to his too vociferous companion that he should apply his usual adjective to everything and start again. Something like this has apparently taken place, for if the subordinate officers are decorated with only five ribbons apiece, the Generals have at least a dozen.

The scale on which honours are bestowed is immaterial so that it is uniform. But whereas a soldier who has risen to high rank in Egypt is thus embellished with many decorations, one whose services have been in India is lucky if he have two medals. Sir William Lockhart has six clasps on his old Frontier medal, and many an officer or native soldier of the Indian army has made campaign after campaign on the Frontier or in Burmah only to add on each occasion to the India medal a little silver bar, hardly ever seen in a country where full uniform is hardly ever worn.

It should not, however, be imagined that the officers of the Egyptian army have not also clasps to show. That branch of decorative art has been carefully attended to. Not only has the ornamental array extended across their breasts from east to west, but also from north to south. Every battle deserves a clasp, and in Egypt every affair is a 'battle.' I take the Soudan almanack, an official publication,[17] to witness. On the same page the following entries are gravely made:—

August 3. Battle of Toski, 1889.
August 6. Battles of Worth and Spicheren, 1870.
August 18. Battle of Gravelotte, 1870.
August 28. Battle of Kassassin, 1882.

[17] Compiled in the Intelligence Branch.

The Khedivial medal which was struck in 1896 has already acquired a possible seven clasps, viz. Firket; Hafir; Abu Hamed; Nile, 1897; Atbara; Khartoum; and Gedaref. No exception will be taken to the last three clasps; but I would especially select from the others that given for the action at Hafir, since it affords a convenient and striking instance of the disparity between the Indian and Egyptian scales of decoration. The almost bloodless skirmish of the Dongola campaign is strongly contrasted with the fierce fight for the Dargai Heights, immortalised by the charge of the Gordon Highlanders. Dargai is famous throughout the Empire; many people will have heard of Hafir only through these pages. Hafir is commemorated by a clasp; no clasp was given for Dargai.

I am inclined to hold by the opinion that in a voluntary army the more medals and decorations distributed to the rank and file, the better for recruiting. It matters little if the Egyptian authorities have been profuse in their distribution of such rewards. It is, however, of manifest importance that some attempt should be made at army headquarters to observe a uniform scale all over the Queen's dominions. From a scrutiny of the practice of late years it is impossible to believe that this has been done. In Egypt, if the scale has been large, the decorations have at least been awarded with justice as well as with generosity. Indeed, the ability which characterises the methods of the Egyptian War Office is displayed in the smallest as in the largest affairs, and stands in marked contrast to the unhandiness

of the Imperial departments in England or in India. Within five weeks of the battle of Khartoum the Sirdar presented the Khedivial medal to all British troops in Cairo who had taken part in the campaign. Compare this with the proceedings of our War Office. It was five months making up its mind whether it would give a British medal at all for the Soudan campaigns. It was for three months exercising its taste upon the pattern of the ribbon: and, although more than twelve months have passed, it has not yet come to a conclusion about the design of the reverse. Perhaps in another year this problem will have been solved, and a few months later the striking of the medals will begin. The issue to the troops may be expected to commence in the year 1902 and, under favourable circumstances, be completed in 1903. But long before that happens most of the soldiers of the 'Short Service' army that fought at Omdurman will be scattered far and wide; they will never be able to proudly wear the medal on the Queen's uniform, to the promotion of regimental spirit and the encouragement of recruiting; and the gift, which the nation wished to give them for good service done, will have been robbed of all its grace and half its value.

In Egypt, again, the numerous clasps have been sensibly confined to those who were actually present at the various actions, and the medal has only been given to such as shared some of the hardships of the campaigns. But the Home and Indian authorities have followed their own method or want of method. It is hard to conceive a more anomalous state of affairs than that

produced by the rules regarding the issue of clasps for the great Frontier war. Men have four clasps who never saw anything like an action. Whole regiments have obtained three clasps per man without one single casualty from the fire of the enemy.[18] Others, many times engaged, have received only the general clasp without which the India medal is never issued, and which is given indiscriminately to every medical and commissariat officer who crossed the Frontier line. The last sentence raises another point which cannot be passed by without remark. It will be said that many officers, who are never under fire, do good work on the line of communications or at the base, and should be rewarded equally with their more fortunate comrades at the front. This is beyond dispute, but the reward such officer should receive should be an honest one and no pretence. When the unenlightened see a soldier wearing medals and clasps, they infer that he is a man who has risked his life in military enterprise. It is possible to serve the State worthily in other spheres of labour and without being shot at. But the value and glamour which attaches to a medal, and still more to a clasp, is due to the belief that actual peril of life attended its being won. And when a man who has never been in action displays such insignia, he is obtaining the public respect under false pretences, although he may be fully worthy of it on other grounds. It is as absurd to give a medical officer a clasp for curing patients

[18] The most notable instance of this is provided by the Royal Irish Regiment. Clasps: Punjaub Frontier, 1897 and 1898; Samana; Tirah. Casualties *nil*.

at the base hospital, or a transport officer for loading mules on the lines of communication, when such places are out of all reach of the enemy, as it would be to make a jockey an archbishop because he rode a good finish.

The longer the spectator watches the play of the fountain, the less he will trust the virtue of its waters. There is no military distinction that has not been prostituted. The compliment of being 'mentioned in despatches' was paid to the entire Staff, including several officers who were only present with the force for a single week; to *all* the veterinary officers with the expedition; to all the wounded officers—a most unusual practice; and to two or three officers in each unit. The Distinguished Service Order, which is a purely personal reward, has been distributed in recent campaigns more often for the mere filling of certain positions than for acts of courage and capacity. One such Order was given in each British battalion of the Nile Expeditionary Force, irrespective of its performances or opportunities. The medal for distinguished gallantry in action, which is reserved for the Non-commissioned ranks, was dealt out in the same indiscriminate manner. Six sergeants in the Grenadiers, including the cook sergeant, were thus decorated simply for going through the campaign with their regiment, and not for any specific acts. Although there is no doubt that these men would have done their duty under all circumstances and in the face of every danger, it is difficult to understand what opportunities for personal gallantry were presented to a battalion whose casualties

during the campaign amounted to five men wounded. The climax of absurdity and, it must be added, of injustice is found in the relative treatment of the two British infantry brigades. The 1st Brigade fought at the Atbara; endured the long, weary wait through the summer at Darmali; was the more sharply engaged at Omdurman, and sustained more than *eight times* the loss of the 2nd Brigade. Yet the 2nd Brigade received a larger share of the honours gazette!

It may be contended that all these matters are very trivial. I dissent. They are not so regarded in the army. But even were they wholly unimportant, then viewing the lack of capacity and information displayed by the War Office in small affairs, the impartial observer will be powerfully tempted to mistrust their judgment in graver things. Since there may be some who, unable to dispute facts, will impute motives, I must remind the reader that although these military distinctions may excite the imagination of the subaltern of horse, they have no personal interest for the sober citizen.

Far more important than the pleasing baubles of honour is the substantial gift of power. The Egyptian service has been a rapid road to advancement. The Sirdar and his Generals have all been promoted over the heads of very large numbers of officers who have won considerable reputations in other lands. But the war on the Nile has been a Generals' war. Lord Kitchener's responsibility has been so great, and his discharge of it so brilliantly successful, that no one will cavil at his preferment. His subordinates of high

rank have displayed remarkable talents. Yet these talents cannot be said to be greater than those of several other General officers whom they have superseded. None of them during the last three years of the war have commanded a larger detached force than a brigade. Their good fortune is, however, their country's; for all are men of high ability, and it is for the good of the State that such should come to the front. But the number of brevets and promotions given to subordinate officers serving with the Egyptian army during the last fifteen years has been enormous. I do not say that these rewards have been undeserved, but the results will excite fierce jealousies when in fifteen years' time it is seen how great a number of the high commands of the army are filled by officers who passed their comrades by taking the Egyptian short cut. Nearly every officer who has served with the Egyptian army has come back to his regiment with increased rank. This book is an appreciation of all that they have achieved. But the continued existence of such a *corps d'élite* will lead to very grave dissatisfaction throughout the army. The British officers employed with the Egyptian troops will have in the near future to be placed on a similar footing to those of the Indian Staff Corps. The reproach will then be removed that the service of the Khedive in Egypt is more profitable than the service of the Empress in India or of the Queen in other parts of her dominions.

The whole principle of selection is brought forward by what has been written, and I embrace the occasion to proclaim my respect for it. The idea of picking

out promising soldiers and pushing them forward into higher command must be attractive to the eyes of youth, in spite of all the injustices which erring human judgment will necessarily produce. The imperious need of having capable men at the head of important military organisations or enterprises brushes aside legality and often fairness. It is a great virtue in a Commander-in-Chief that he be impartial. It is a much greater virtue if he pick good men, so that the military undertakings of the nation prosper. Nearly all State undertakings cost more, and are worse done, than private businesses, exposed to the invigorating breezes of competition. The principle of selection is the very essence of commerce, and the nearer we can approximate the methods of choosing officers for high command to those followed in a great commercial business, the more efficient the army will become.

Two considerations limit the application of the principle of selection to State departments. I am here concerned only with the army. In business the power of choosing is vested in men deeply interested in the results of their judgment. If the head of a firm entrust important affairs to a stupid agent, he probably loses money. The sincerity of his effort to pick the right man is therefore assured. But in the army no personal interest of this kind stimulates the selecting officers; and although most men generally try to do right, many impulses restrain or bias their opinions. Of all these the commonest and perhaps the worthiest is expressed by the maxim 'Live and let live.' After all, it is natural that an officer should indulge his

generous feeling at the public expense. 'Poor old So-and-so!' he says; 'it's very hard to turn him out.' Thus the public service lies under disadvantages from which private enterprises are free; for in all businesses 'poor old So-and-so' has to go as soon as anyone appears who can fill his place better or cheaper.

I do not advocate a merciless and impersonal selection. Men are not machines, and no one is the worse for the indulgence of human feelings. But the complement of a system of selection is a second system whereby the choosers can be made responsible for their choices; so that if a General appoint bad men, he suffers himself, just as the merchant suffers who employs a stupid commercial traveller. Provided that these two systems are co-existent, no good man will be afraid of selection. At present both are imperfectly carried out.

The second restriction is more obvious. If the principle of selection were rigorously followed, discipline, without which no army can exist, would be destroyed. The clever subaltern would show but scanty respect for the stupid major whom he was soon to supersede. It is not therefore impossible that the present imperfect arrangement is, after all, a haphazard method of arriving at a very nice and delicate mean which men could not discover by a more elaborate or more regular calculation.

Although the present system of selection should not by any means be condemned, the profession of arms disappoints nearly all who pursue it. The observation

may seem strange. The soldier's roving life is filled with manly pleasures and devoid of squalor; a fine gallant existence in the open air. During the precious years of youth few and small are the cares of the subaltern, many and delightful his friends and amusements. The greatest prizes await success. The road lies through a smiling country, and at the end of the journey there rise most magnificent palaces. But the bright years of promise soon slip away—hardly appreciated till they are gone. The officer grown older perceives in disagreeable surprise that others, the equal companions of former days, have travelled along less pleasant roads and stand far ahead of him. The surrounding scene is changed. The green fields of enterprise and hope have given place to the sterile wastes of monotonous routine. The day draws to a close, and it becomes certain that the palaces, that still rise fair and splendid on the distant horizon, will not be reached before the night.

Opportunity comes to few. In the army men may not seek, as in other professions, by tremendous energy to compel fortune. All must wait, often for years at a time. And even the lucky few, to whom the chance comes of perhaps commanding a brigade in war, may have their only opportunity ruined in an hour by the malice of a superior or the folly of a subordinate.

The proportion of failures to successes is in all spheres of human action necessarily large; but in the army men less readily recognise their own inferiority, because they are not able to work to the full limit of

their talents and energy. There is not enough scope for all their efforts; and when they see themselves outpaced they refuse to recognise the justice of their defeat. The claims of long service, of punctilious discharge of duty, perhaps of perils encountered and suffering borne, are passionately urged. 'But,' says Cæsar's nephew, 'he's a tried and valiant soldier.' Nor can Lepidus be expected to admit the force of Antony's rejoinder:

> So is my horse, Octavius; and for that
> I do appoint him store of provender.[19]

And so it happens that while all smiles in the early morning, the afternoon is grey and cheerless; and nearly every military officer leaves the army, to which he has given whatever he had to give of youth and strength, soured by disappointment and often irritated by a sense of injustice—usually mistaken, but sometimes true.

The greater part of 'The River War' is an account of the deeds of one man, and it is very natural that this chapter should end with some reference to the commander who broke the Dervish power and reconquered the Soudan. I have traced the earlier events of his adventurous life, and have described in detail, and I hope without prejudice, the victorious campaigns on which his reputation rests. It is not possible for one who writes after the wild plaudits of the crowd have ceased to echo, and the panegyrics of the Press are become pulp again in the paper mills or have lighted

[19] *Julius Cæsar*, Act iv. Scene 1.

the fires and lined the portmanteaus of a bustling age, to soberly endorse the thoughtless eulogies of ignorant enthusiasm. To do justice to a great man, discriminating criticism is necessary. Gush, however quenching, is always insipid.

The battles and actions of the war afforded little opportunity for tactical skill. Firket was the advance of 9,000 disciplined troops against 2,500 Dervishes; the Atbara, the march of an overwhelming force into the position of a demoralised enemy. Omdurman was mainly the mechanical scattering of death by well-armed men on the defensive upon badly armed men in the open. Yet, small as were the opportunities for error, each of these actions presents doubtful features. At Firket numbers of the Arabs escaped, owing to the fact that the Desert Column was not allowed to operate decisively upon the line of retreat. At the Atbara the tactics seriously discounted the power of modern weapons, and the tumultuous advance certainly caused an unnecessary loss of life. At Omdurman the premature left wheel compromised the safety of the rearmost brigade, and exposed the Transport and hospitals to a terrible danger.

To appreciate the achievements of the General it is necessary to study the war in its strategic aspect. Kitchener's campaigns on the Nile will always be remarkable in military history for their machine-like regularity and for their extraordinary economy. In the latter respect they are as yet without parallel. Never has so large a country been conquered and so powerful an enemy destroyed by civilised troops at such

a small cost in money. Some of the methods by which this result has been attained would scarcely excite the admiration of a wealthy people. But the Sirdar was the Khedive's General. Until the last campaign he had only the slender resources of a country groaning under an oppressive debt to depend upon. He may have been hard and stingy, but not otherwise could Egypt have recovered her lost provinces.

It is possible to explain, but it is not possible to condemn, the strategy of the war. In every instance the General placed on the field of battle an overwhelming, well-fed, thoroughly equipped army, in a suitable position for encountering the enemy. On every occasion the enemy were practically destroyed. On no occasion was the whole result in doubt, when the morning of the action revealed the antagonists. The chances of battle were reduced to a negligible fraction. There is no higher strategy than this. The reconquest of the Soudan differs from most British wars in its later stages, in that it became an act of calculated and deliberate policy, and not a hurried, unavoidable conflict breaking out unexpectedly and against the wishes of the Government. It was a war of the same character as that which Bismarck waged in 1870 and meditated again in 1878. After every advantage has, however, been admitted, the methodical conduct of the operations will always excite the admiration of military specialists. *In nearly three years of war nothing of any consequence went wrong.* What prouder boast could a General make than this plain statement of fact?

But whoever examines the strategy of Kitchener's

campaigns will find many other qualities displayed than those of calculation and business-like foresight. The comprehensive grasp of the whole conditions of Soudan war reveals a breadth and strength of intellect which transcend the limitations of the expert. The determined confidence with which at the precise and logical moment Hunter's column was hurled upon Abu Hamed; the still more daring capture of Berber; and, greatest of all, the construction of the Desert Railway, brighten the account with flashes of real genius. Kitchener carried into the solemn department of strategy an originality and personal force for which few soldiers have found scope even among the vivid scenes of the actual battle.

It is a thankless duty to expose the reverse of the medal. But the meanest historian owes something to truth. His wonderful industry, his undisturbed patience, his noble perseverance, are qualities too valuable for a man to enjoy in this imperfect world without complementary defects. The General who never spared himself, cared little for others. He treated all men like machines—from the private soldiers whose salutes he disdained, to the superior officers he rigidly controlled. The comrade who had served with him and under him for many years in peace and peril was flung aside incontinently as soon as he ceased to be of use. The Sirdar looked only to the soldiers who could march and fight. The wounded Egyptian, and latterly the wounded British soldier, did not excite his interest, and of all the departments of his army the one neglected was that concerned with the care of the sick and injured. The

lamentable episode of the Mahdi's Tomb has already been noticed. The stern and unpitying spirit of the commander was communicated to his troops, and the victories which marked the progress of the River War were accompanied by acts of barbarity not always justified even by the harsh customs of savage conflicts or the fierce and treacherous nature of the Dervish.

Yet, when the whole has been dispassionately recorded, a great and splendid figure remains. For all he had endured and all he had accomplished his countrymen were able to bestow a fitting reward. The enthusiasm with which all classes of the Queen's subjects welcomed him home may not have stirred his unemotional temperament. The Grand Cross of the Bath may distinguish the unknown, but it is unnecessary to the famous. An English Peerage, with its consequent money grant, is however a gift, not only of high honour, but substantial power. The subscription of more than £100,000, which his personal influence collected from the nation for the furtherance of a favourite scheme, was a sincere pledge of its gratitude and admiration. And lastly, although it is given to few great soldiers to rule the lands they have conquered, Lord Kitchener is Governor-General of the Soudan. While he is in the exercise of that great office this story ceases to follow his fortunes. What the future may contain is idle to inquire. Whether the General will shine as an administrator, whether he has more victories to win—perhaps in other regions—time will gradually show. For the present we may rejoice

in his good fortune, which has enabled him to accomplish, while still comparatively a young man, a task that might well have filled a lifetime, and leaves him free to devote to the further service of the State his remarkable talents—talents which will never be fettered by fear, and not very often by sympathy.

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CHAPTER XXVI AND LAST

A GENERAL VIEW

Summary of the War—Firket—Dongola—Abu Hamed—Atbara—Omdurman—Gedaref—Rosaires—The cost—A financial statement—The purchase—Reproductive expenditure—The Lion's share—The camel—The 'Special Reserve Fund'—The palm-tree—Egypt's reason—England's reason—French influence—Nominal causes—'Avenging Gordon'—Cant and humbug—Dervish civilisation—Abdullahi's claim—The justice of the war—Condition of the Soudan—Depopulation—The natural remedy—What must be avoided—Legal complications—Necessity for British officers—Missionaries—The Khartoum College—The company promoter—The small trader—Feeling in Egypt—Irrigation—Two small reforms—Greater schemes—The Blue Nile barrage—A perennial supply—Egypt's needs—The White Nile—The great swamp—Leakage—Strange dreams—Railways—Cape to Cairo—Extension to Abu Haraz—The embarrassments of the present—The great Administrator—The end.

On the 12th of March, 1896, the Sirdar received instructions to make a demonstration on the Halfa frontier, and within a few days these orders were extended to the reconquest of the Dongola province. On the 28th Akasha was occupied by a brigade under Colonel MacDonald and the reconstruction of the railway commenced. The operations were not disturbed by some unsatisfactory fighting around Suakin. By the end of May sufficient supplies had been accumulated in the advanced base to make it possible—as the growth of the railway made it desirable—to dislodge the Der-

vishes from their position at Firket. The operation was prepared with secrecy; it was performed with suddenness. On the night of the 7th of June the Sirdar marched with three brigades towards the Dervish camp. The enemy were surprised at dawn. With the loss of a hundred soldiers the Arabs were routed or destroyed; their commander, the Emir Hammuda, was slain, and the town was taken.

The advance was now delayed by the progress of the railway and the accumulation of supplies. In spite of floods, pestilence, and contrary winds, all preparations were completed when the river rose. The flotilla was dragged up the cataracts. The army advanced along the bank. The Dervishes, unable to withstand the overwhelming forces of the Government, crossed to the western side of the Nile. On the 19th of September the gunboats, passing the Arab batteries, threatened their line of retreat, and the valiant Wad Bishara was glad to save himself and his host by flight. Swiftly transporting his army across the river, the Sirdar followed. At Dongola the enemy again refused an unequal combat, and fled in disorder into the deserts. The whole province was regained for Egypt; garrisons were established in the principal towns; and civil order was restored under the Governorship of General Hunter.

A long pause in the active operations followed. The British Government, encouraged by success, determined to advance to Khartoum. The question of the route to be followed arose. From several alternatives the Sirdar selected the line from Wady

Halfa to Abu Hamed. A railway was immediately begun under the direction of Lieutenant Girouard across the desert between those places, thus cutting off the great bend of the river. The work continued through the summer, and meanwhile the bulk of the Egyptian army remained in Dongola. By the end of July the further progress of the railway was arrested by its approach to the Dervish force in Abu Hamed. During the first week in August, therefore, General Hunter, marching with a brigade along the Nile bank from Merawi in the Dongola province, captured the village at the point of the bayonet with a loss of two British officers and some seventy soldiers. The panic of the Dervishes and their desertion by the riverain tribes encouraged the boldest tactics. Berber was seized, and communication was opened between the Nile and Suakin. The railway reached Abu Hamed, and by the end of the year was being extended southwards.

Meanwhile the Khalifa, unable to prevent the advance, was resolved to compass the destruction of the expedition. He assembled 50,000 men at Omdurman and sent 20,000 under Mahmud to Metemma. Doubts and dissensions, however, disturbed his councils. In October the Dervishes at Metemma were reconnoitred and bombarded by the gunboats. As all remained quiet on the Upper Nile, the Sirdar hastened to Kassala and concerned himself with its retrocession by the Italians. Returning to the Nile, he learned that the Khalifa was determined to advance and retake Berber. He telegraphed for a British brigade and concentrated

all available troops to meet the attack. Jealousies and rivalry again hampered the enemy. Their advance was delayed. Meanwhile the reinforcements arrived.

Although the Khalifa would not advance himself, he sent his lieutenant on a desperate errand. During February the patrolling gunboats observed that Mahmud was crossing with his army to the east bank of the river. In March the Dervish Emir moved northwards towards the entrenched camp which had been formed at the confluence of the Nile with the Atbara. The British and Egyptian forces concentrated at Kunur. Conscious that they could not hope to prevail by a direct assault, the Dervishes moved eastward to Nakheila, on the Atbara river, with the design of turning the Sirdar's flank and striking at Berber. The advance of the troops up the Atbara prevented the enemy's plan; scarcity of food delayed their retreat. After repeated reconnaissance the British General determined to attack. Marching with four brigades of infantry, nine squadrons, and thirty guns from Abadar, during the night of the 7th of April 1898, the Sirdar attacked the enemy at daybreak on Good Friday. A brief artillery preparation was followed by a general advance; and the British and Egyptian infantry, although sustaining a loss of nearly six hundred men, carried the stockades and entrenchments, and routed the Dervishes with a horrid slaughter. The army then went into summer quarters.

The hotter season was occupied with arrangements for a final advance when the river should again rise.

The flotilla was strengthened by three powerful vessels. The British contingent was increased by the arrival of a second infantry brigade, a cavalry regiment, and two batteries of artillery. The whole Egyptian army, with the exception of the small garrisons at Suakin and Kassala, was collected, forming one cavalry and four infantry brigades and eight batteries of artillery or Maxim guns. Twenty-five thousand men, armed with the most powerful military machinery yet invented, awaited with eagerness the resumption of the war. The Dervishes remained massed at Omdurman.

The neglect or policy of the enemy having left unguarded the strong position of the Shabluka Cataract, the Sirdar was able to concentrate his force at Wad Hamed, less than sixty miles from Khartoum, and to turn the last considerable natural barrier without opposition. On the 23rd of August the Expeditionary Force began its final advance along the west bank. The Dervishes contented themselves with watching it with small bands of horsemen, whose action was checked by the British and Egyptian cavalry. On the 1st of September the troops reached the plains of Kerreri, and the cavalry reconnoitring discovered the Dervish army, more than 50,000 strong, drawn up outside Omdurman.

The Sirdar backed himself on the river and, while the flotilla bombarded the city, awaited the attack of the enemy. It was delivered with desperate courage at dawn on the 2nd, and bloodily repulsed by a tremendous fire of artillery and musketry. The British General ordered an immediate advance on the city.

The Arabs, still undefeated, attacked again with greater determination, and were beaten off with greater loss. The battle was won. Amid the thunder of sixty guns and the wild whirl of a cavalry charge the Dervish domination fell in irretrievable ruin. Nine thousand warriors were slain; even greater numbers were wounded; six thousand prisoners were captured; the remainder fled. The city was taken. The Khalifa unhappily escaped, and with a disheartened following took refuge in Kordofan. The victory was cheaply won at a loss of five hundred soldiers.

The territories of the Egyptian Soudan were reoccupied in the name of the Government, and the remaining Dervish forces dispersed. Marching from Kassala, when the news of the success on the Nile was received, Colonel Parsons attacked the Dervishes in Gedaref, and after a fierce fight defeated them and took the town. Here he was in turn vainly assailed by Ahmed Fedil, a notable Emir, with a strong force. On the arrival of a relieving column from Omdurman the besiegers withdrew, and the Emir endeavoured to join the Khalifa in Kordofan. The navigable reaches of the Blue and White Niles were, however, patrolled by gunboats, and garrisons had been established at all important points. While engaged in crossing the Blue Nile near the Rosaires Cataract, Ahmed Fedil was attacked by Colonel Lewis with a small but invincible force, and in a brilliant action was heavily defeated. His followers, fleeing to the White Nile, surrendered. The Khalifa still maintains himself in Kordofan, but he has become a nuisance rather than a

danger. The Eastern Soudan, and the whole of the vast regions drained or watered by the Blue and White Niles and their tributaries, have been brought under the joint rule of Great Britain and Egypt.

This brief summary displays at once the skilful conduct of the operations and their great results. The question immediately arises: At what cost were such advantages obtained? The reader must judge for himself of the loss in men; yet while he deplores the deaths of brave officers and soldiers, and no less the appalling destruction of the valiant Arabs, he should remember that such slaughter is inseparable from war; and that, if the war be justified, the loss of life cannot be accused. But I write of the cost in money, and the economy of the campaigns cannot be better displayed than by the following table:

—	I. Railway	II. Telegraph	III. Gunboats	IV. Military expenditure	Total
	£E*	£E	£E	£E	£E
Dongola campaign: Around Suakin, Firket, Hafir, Dongola	181,851	8,299	65,869	469,622	725,641
Subsequent military operations: Abu Hamed, Berber, Atbara, Omdurman, Gedaref, Rosaires	699,521	13,526	89,065	526,601	1,328,713
Khartoum railway extension	300,000	—	—	—	300,000
Total £E	1,181,372	21,825	154,934	996,223	2,354,354

* £E1=1*l.* 0*s.* 6*d.*

For something less than two and a half millions sterling active military operations have been carried on for nearly three years, involving the employment—far from its base—of an army of 25,000 disciplined troops, including an expensive British contingent of 8,000 men, and ending in the utter defeat of an enemy whose armed forces numbered at the beginning of the war upwards of 80,000 soldiers, and the reconquest and re-occupation of a territory measuring sixteen hundred miles from north to south and twelve hundred from east to west,[1] which at one time supported at least twenty millions of inhabitants. But this is not all. Of the total £E2,354,354 only £E996,223 can be accounted as military expenditure. For the remaining £E1,358,131 Egypt possesses 500 miles of railway, 900 miles of telegraph, and a flotilla of steamers. The railway will not indeed pay a great return upon the capital invested, but it will immediately pay something, and may ultimately pay much. The telegraph is as necessary as the railway to the development of the country; it costs far less, and, when the Egyptian system is connected with the South African, it will be a sure source of revenue. Lastly, there are the gunboats. The reader cannot have any doubts as to the value of these vessels during the war. Never was money better spent on military plant. Now that the river operations are over, the gunboats discharge the duties of ordinary steamers; and although they are, of course, expensive machines for goods and passenger traffic, they are by no means inefficient.

[1] Lieut.-Colonel Stewart's Report: Egypt, No. 11, 1883.

The movement of the troops, their extra pay, the supplies at the end of a long line of communications, the ammunition, the loss by wear and tear of uniforms and accoutrements, the correspondence, the rewards, all cost together less than a million sterling; and for that million Egypt has recovered the Soudan.

The whole £E2,354,354 had, however, to be paid during the campaigns. Towards this sum Great Britain advanced, as has been related, eight hundred thousand as a loan; and this was subsequently converted into a gift. The cost to the British taxpayer of the recovery and part acquisition of the Soudan, of the military prestige, and of the indulgence of the sentiment known as 'the avenging of Gordon' has therefore been £800,000; and it may be stated in all seriousness that English history does not record any instance of so great a national satisfaction being more cheaply obtained. The rest of the money has been provided by Egypt; and this strange country, seeming to resemble the camel, on which so much of her wealth depends, has, in default of the usual sources of supply, drawn upon some fifth stomach for nourishment, and, to the perplexity even of those best acquainted with her amazing financial constitution, has stood the strain.

'The extraordinary expenditure in connection with the Soudan campaign,' wrote Mr. J. L. Gorst, the Financial Adviser to the Khedive in his Note of December 20, 1898,[2] 'has been charged to the Special Reserve Fund. At the present moment this fund

[2] Note by the Financial Adviser on the Budget of 1899: Egypt, No. 3, 1899.

shows a deficit of £E336,000, and there are outstanding charges on account of the expedition amounting to £E330,000, making a total deficit of £E666,000.

'On the other hand, the fund will be increased, when the accounts of the year are made up, by a sum of £E382,000, being the balance of the share of the Government in the surplus of 1898, after deduction of the excess administrative expenditure in that year, and by a sum of £E90,000, being part of the proceeds of the sale of the Khedivial postal steamers. The net deficit will, therefore, be £E194,000; and if the year 1899 is as prosperous as the present year, it may be hoped that the deficit will disappear when the accounts of 1899 are closed.'

The long story now approaches its conclusion. The River War is over. The battles have been fought. The cost in men and money is paid, and the flags of England and Egypt wave unchallenged over the valley of the Nile.

A great, though perhaps academic, question remains: Was the war justified by wisdom and by right?

If the reader will look at a map of the Nile system, he cannot fail to be struck by its resemblance to a palm-tree. At the top the green and fertile area of the Delta spreads like the graceful leaves and foliage. The stem is perhaps a little twisted, for the Nile makes a vast bend in flowing through the deserts. South of Khartoum the likeness is again perfect, and the roots of the tree begin to stretch deeply into the Soudan. I can imagine no better illustration of the intimate and sympathetic connection between Egypt and the

southern provinces. The water—the life of the Delta—is drawn from the Soudan, and passes along the channel of the Nile, as the sap passes up the stem of the tree, to produce a fine crop of fruit above. The benefit to Egypt is obvious; but Egypt does not benefit alone. The advantages of the connection are mutual; for if the Soudan is thus naturally and geographically an integral part of Egypt, Egypt is no less essential to the developement of the Soudan. Of what use would the roots and the rich soil be, if the stem were severed, by which alone their vital essence may find expression in the upper air.

Here, then, is a plain and honest reason for the River War. To unite territories that could not indefinitely have continued divided; to combine peoples whose future welfare is inseparably intermingled; to collect energies which, concentrated, may promote a common interest; to join together what could not improve apart—these are the objects which, history will pronounce, have justified the enterprise.

The advantage of Great Britain is no less clear to those who believe that our connection with Egypt, as with India, is in itself a source of strength. The grasp of England upon Egypt has been strengthened twofold by the events of the war. The joint action and ownership of the two countries in the basin of the Upper Nile form an additional bond between them. The command of the vital river is an irresistible weapon. The influence of France over the native mind in Egypt has been completely destroyed by the result of the Fashoda negotiations; and

although she still retains the legal power to meddle in and obstruct all financial arrangements, that power, unsupported by real influence, is like a body whence the soul has fled, which may indeed be an offensive encumbrance, but must ultimately decompose and crumble into dust.[3]

[3] The opinion of an Egyptian on this point may be of interest. The following extract is taken from a letter which I have received from a native gentleman. It should be stated that he is a supporter of the British occupation, but quite unconnected with the Government:

'The Opposition party, which calls itself the National Party, is principally composed of men whose dislike to the British occupation is based solely on the fact that the occupying Power is not a Moslem Power. The members of this party have always shown great partiality for France. In every instance where France has opposed the work of England in Egypt they have openly shown their sympathy with France, and wished her all success in her opposition, although they knew in many instances that it was in direct conflict with the interests of Egypt. They, moreover, often referred with joy to France's intention to occupy the valley of the Upper Nile, and thus compel England to abandon the idea of taking possession of the whole Nile valley. When they heard that Marchand and his party had reached Fashoda, they hoped the time had come when France would rid them of the occupying Power. The most influential native papers on the Opposition side laid great stress on this point, and openly discussed the programme to be followed in Egypt once England had been compelled to evacuate the country. When England insisted that France must leave Fashoda as a preliminary to any discussion they were jubilant, and their joy was scarcely restrained when they saw that preparations for war were being made on both sides. There are many reasons for believing that the leaders of the Opposition party were well informed of the designs of France long before Marchand reached Fashoda, and they were convinced that France would rather fight than retire before England. But when it became apparent that France would not fight, and that as a matter of fact she had given way to England, they were terribly disappointed. From one extreme they now went to the other, and attacked France more violently than they had ever attacked England. With the withdrawal from Fashoda, indeed, the influence of France among the native population of Egypt entirely disappeared. Egyptians no longer look to France for help; they are disposed rather to oppose than to further French interests. When French influence disappeared, the Opposition party also vanished, and its leaders gave up the struggle.'

But, apart from any connection with Egypt, Britain has gained a vast territory which, although it would be easy to exaggerate its value, is nevertheless coveted by every Great Power in Europe. The policy of acquiring large waterways, which has been pursued deliberately or unconsciously by British statesmen for three centuries, has been carried one step further; and in the valley of the Nile England may develope a trade which, passing up and down the river and its complement the railway, shall exchange the manufactures of the Temperate Zone for the products of the Tropic of Cancer, exchange the cloth of Lancashire and the cutlery of Sheffield for the wheat of Sennar and the feathers and ivory of Kordofan, shall use the north wind to drive civilisation and prosperity to the south and the stream of the Nile to bear wealth and commerce to the sea.

It usually happens, however, that the nominal and the real causes of great disputes are totally different. The popular war-cry and the true explanation of the quarrel are distinct. One is loud, tumultuous, and on the surface. The other often lies, deep and subtle, beneath the history of many years. A brilliant modern writer has shown that the wars of England and France in the last three centuries were only the incidents of a great struggle for commercial and imperial supremacy. That certainly was not the opinion of those who fought them. All sorts of other causes presented themselves. Other watchwords, now perhaps forgotten, were used by the statesmen who ordered and the soldiers who performed. The sudden

squabble of the moment absorbed their attention. The long antagonism of a hundred years was overlooked or unperceived.

In a similar way recent events in the Soudan have been defended and explained on grounds which history, it is to be hoped, will ignore. First of all, it has been said that the war was waged to avenge General Gordon. In trying to describe the scenes and emotions of the campaigns I have alluded—not lightly—to this idea of vengeance. But the tale has now been told. The event is decided. The period of reflection and of review has begun, and it is time to have done with such talk. General Gordon was killed in fair war. It is true that to his character as a military commander he joined that of an envoy. As such his person was sacred to his countrymen. But it would be most unjust to expect the wild Arabs of the desert to understand this. They recognised in Gordon only the leader of the army of the 'Turks,' and, being victorious, killed him in the heat of the assault. But even had they appreciated the position of an envoy, even had they deliberately killed him in cold blood or by treachery, the penalty they have paid would have been sufficient. A short ride over the field of Omdurman must satisfy the most unrelenting. Revenge may be a good inspiration for soldiers in action. It is not, however, an incentive to which Gordon would often have appealed, nor is it a dignified emotion for a great people to display.

Another reason has been given. We are told that the Anglo-Egyptian army invaded the Soudan to

punish the wickedness of its inhabitants. It is the habit of the boa constrictor to besmear the body of his victim with a foul slime before he devours it; and there are many people in England, and perhaps elsewhere, who seem to be unable to contemplate military operations for clear political objects, unless they can cajole themselves into the belief that their enemy are utterly and hopelessly vile. To this end the Dervishes, from the Mahdi and the Khalifa downwards, have been loaded with every variety of abuse and charged with all conceivable crimes. This may be very comforting to philanthropic persons at home; but when an army in the field becomes imbued with the idea that the enemy are vermin who cumber the earth, instances of barbarity may very easily be the outcome. This unmeasured condemnation is moreover as unjust as it is dangerous and unnecessary. The Dervishes were not the abandoned savages they had long been declared. They possessed a drilled and disciplined army, an organised Government, a mint, a powder factory, and courts of law. It is true that these institutions were not so well ordered as in civilised countries. The army was easily defeated. The Government was a cruel despotism. The mint issued debased coins. The factory made bad powder. The law-courts were capricious and corrupt. But the fact that these things existed shows that the Arabs of the Soudan were not wholly irreclaimable, and they may under happier circumstances and with tolerant guidance develope into a virtuous and law-abiding community.

The abuse which has been dispersed generally

among the Dervishes has focussed itself on the Khalifa, Abdullahi. It has, among other things, been freely stated that his rule was odious to his subjects, and we are told that the British and Egyptian armies entered Omdurman to free the people from his yoke. Never were rescuers more unwelcome. The thousands that advanced upon the *zeriba* on the 2nd of September, or who stood unflinching against the cavalry charge, were not pressed men. They fought for a cause to which they were devoted, and for a ruler in whose reign they acquiesced. I do not pretend that the Khalifa was a good or merciful sovereign. It is beyond dispute that he was a man who delighted in every form of cruelty. The love of low cunning which his acts reveal deprives his authority of all dignity and himself of the sympathy of the conquerors. But he must be judged by other codes than ours; and so judged, he need not fear comparison with several potentates with whom the Imperial Government has not scrupled to establish intimate and cordial relations. His house exhibited several signs of cleanliness and refinement. He did not even in the crash of his authority massacre his prisoners, and when found, they did not look ill-fed. The loyalty of a large section of his people—unquestionably displayed—gives him some claims to be considered a fair ruler according to his light and theirs. He has in no wise forfeited his right to be treated according to the customs of war, and if he be happily taken prisoner, an honourable confinement is what justice should accord.

I have recorded a mild protest against the vindictive

and implacable spirit with which the Dervishes are regarded in certain quarters. But the wisdom of the war is generally admitted, and there will be few who will deny its justice. It is hypocritical to say that it was waged to chastise the wickedness of the Dervishes. It is wrong to declare that it was fought to avenge General Gordon. The quarrel was clear. Certain savage men had invaded the Egyptian territories, had killed their inhabitants and their guardians, and had possessed themselves of the land. In due course it became convenient, as well as desirable, to expel these intruders and reoccupy these territories. The Khedive enjoys his own again—by proxy. The Dervishes are slain or scattered. They lived by the sword. Why should they not perish by the magazine rifle? A state of society which, even if it were tolerable to those whom it comprised, was an annoyance to civilised nations has been swept away. The Khalifa is gone—'bag and baggage'; his power is for ever shattered; his followers are dispersed; and the philanthropist need have no doubts that what happened in the Soudan in 1898 was for the good of the world, of England, and of Egypt. And what of the Soudan itself?

The long fever and the violent paroxysms are over. The hideous growth of Mahdism that had produced them, has been cut out, and the land lies prostrate and utterly exhausted. Sixty years of merciless oppression, sixteen years of fierce convulsion, have reduced the once teeming population of the Upper Nile valley by more than seventy-five per cent. Wide regions are

depopulated. Great tracts have passed out of cultivation. The villages have fallen back into the sand. The date-palms have been cut down. The she-camels are dead. The water-wheels and scoops have been destroyed.[4] Nearly all the men have perished. The vast preponderance of females has lowered the practice, if not the conception, of morality. Where there was room for wives, there is now only opportunity for concubines. The balance of the species has followed all else to destruction. 'There is,' to quote an official euphemism, 'a great dearth of population.'

Yet the first need of the Soudan is human labour. That it may pay, it must be developed. That it may be developed, it must have men. At present there are very few left alive. The rich soil by the banks of the Nile produces twice a year an abundant crop of *doura*. On this the survivors can comfortably exist. Naturally they will choose the most fertile spots, and with little labour will draw their nourishment from the generous earth. All this may be very pleasant for them, but it is not likely to promote the developement of the country. The wealth of the Soudan in former days depended upon the slave trade and upon the forced labour of the natives. The first is broken, and is to be utterly stamped out. No extensive application of the second is likely or desirable.

[4] 'There used formerly to be 3,000 *sakias* (water-scoops) between the Atbara and Khartoum. I was informed, on the occasion of my recent visit, that there are now not more than seventy; I doubt if there are so many.'—Lord Cromer's Report: Egypt, No. 3, 1899.

The destruction of a great part of a population has always been productive of ease and material comfort to those who remain. Competition is removed, and we arrive at a period of arrest. The men in the Soudan are few, and they possess—at present—no incentive to work. In the eternal course of life Nature will repair both these deficiencies. The Soudan must have rest. Time must be given for the natives to increase and multiply. Gradually, under favourable conditions, this will take place. The population will rise, like the waters of the Nile. At first only the lowest or most fertile tracts will be covered; but, as the volume of the waters spreads, the inundation will increase, and by degrees the higher or poorer ground will be submerged. Pressure of competition will force, and the more numerous wants of civilisation will encourage the native to labour. The less fertile tracts will come into cultivation. At last all the land which is neither desert nor marsh will be covered with a smiling crop.

Then the Soudan will begin to yield a revenue, and the revenue—put back into the soil—will increase the wealth and improve the condition of the people. In time, if the evolution is not interrupted, their type and intelligence will advance; their ideals will become less degraded; their morality more pure; their scale of life—its hopes and happiness—larger. And if the reader inquire to what end the negroes should labour that they may improve; why they should not remain contented, if degraded; and wherefore they should be made to toil to better things up so painful a road, I confess I cannot answer him. If, however, he prove

that there is no such obligation he will have made out a very good case for universal suicide.

But I have been looking far into the future. The course of evolution is so clear and simple that the mind is carried on beyond the days that we shall see, and we forget our own short span. The present is our care. The action of Nature may be assisted by favourable circumstances, and perhaps in a generation the waste of war will be repaired. Then, and not until then, will the real developement of the country and the progress of its people begin. In the meanwhile it is our business to give the natives the favourable circumstances necessary to the repopulation of the country.

Our policy must be mainly negative, and there are more acts to be avoided than performed. The Soudan, tortured for so many years, appeals to its conquerors for rest and peace. This is the first essential, and it is within our power to give it. The strong hand of civilised government can prevent the warring of tribe with tribe, and the strife of classes or of individuals. Nothing is of such consequence as this; but there are other disturbing elements that must be excluded.

There is scarcely any greater evil that can come upon a community than a system of government wholly unsuited to their wants and their ideas, which has been imposed from without, and which they cannot understand. The rough-and-ready justice of the sword, the trial by fire, and the practice of barter would hardly disturb our modern life so much as the complicated legalities of civilisation perplex and alarm the savage.

The wisest provisions of law and equity often produce the queerest results. In India, where the people are of a much higher type than in the Soudan, the gift —so priceless to a European people—of a just and elaborate civil code and of numerous law-courts has been totally misapplied. Where they should have gone to obtain justice, they go to obtain excitement; and the litigious fever, not less strong than the gambling mania among some Europeans, confounds the legislators. The most rational expedients operate in a manner exactly contrary to European anticipation. Wishing to reduce the mortality from snake-bite, and hoping to extirpate the species, the Indian Government offer a reward for the skins of cobras. Forthwith cobra-farming becomes an extensive industry. It would be as easy as it is superfluous to multiply these instances. One disturbing factor that must be excluded from the Soudan is a complicated and unsuitable system of government and equity. The people understand brute force, and they understand personality; but legality and precedent are beyond them. For the first few years, while the country is still disturbed, the personal rule of selected military officers is the best that can be devised. The proposal will, no doubt, excite in certain quarters a contemptuous sneer. The horrors of martial tyranny, of rights ignored, of conquered races trampled to the ground, will be painted vividly. Sensible people will soberly reject this pernicious rubbish. It is true that a proportion of officers in British regiments firmly adhere to what is known as 'the damned nigger' theory. But this idea nearly

always disappears as soon as they conceive their honour to be wrapped up in the behaviour or condition of the natives under their control. The strong sympathy between the British officers and their soldiers in native regiments, which is no less apparent in Egypt than in India, may have received some examples in this book. Besides, I write of 'selected officers'; and from the great number of gallant gentlemen which our country produces it will be easy to find those few whose talents for administration are suited to the occasion. It will not be impossible to find men who would devote themselves to the natives, win their confidence and affection, settle their disputes, develope their industries, reward the virtuous, and punish the guilty. But, although the men exist, it will be difficult to attract them to the Soudan. It is useless for them to go for a year or two, as a stepping-stone to something else. They must be prepared to make the Soudan the scene of their life's work. And what does this involve? It means for many years the sacrifice of nearly everything that is desirable—comfort, sport, companionship, probably health, and possibly life itself. It is not likely that such men will be obtained to do such work for nothing. It will be necessary to bid for them in the open market. High pay, high honours, extensive powers, and great responsibility —these are the inducements that must be offered to draw the best. But if the best can be found, all other questions connected with the administration of the Soudan will be carried much nearer to their settlement.

It is difficult to write sourly about missionary enterprise. The motives which inspire it are high and

holy. The men who go forth to preach the Gospel are prepared for the utmost stroke of fortune. The religion that no longer seeks proselytes is soon to be forgotten. The missionary is nevertheless at present undesirable in the Soudan. When the exhausted patient is sleeping quietly, and the chance of recovery grows, even the priest must be content to wait outside the door. Lord Kitchener foresaw, that after the fall of Omdurman there would be an outburst of philanthropic emotion. All the sentiment aroused by the name of Gordon, all the horror excited by the terrible slaughter of the final battle, must find their outlet. There would be an almost passionate desire to help the people thus desperately defeated—to repair their injuries, to lift their hopes, to point the better way. It was necessary to divert this enthusiasm into a secular channel. That has been the first function of the Khartoum College. I pause for a moment to examine this celebrated institution.

The subscription of more than £120,000, raised in so short a time, proves at once the wealth and generosity of the nation, and its delight at the victory. Viewed in the light of past experience, it is difficult to regard the scheme with unmixed satisfaction. [Education has not been altogether a blessing in India] Neither is it our custom to teach subject races the English language. The truth is, however, that the word 'College' is scarcely applicable. It suggests higher education. Now higher education presupposes lower education; and the Soudanese have no education. The first aspect in which Lord Kitchener's institution will present itself is that

of a small primary school where a certain number of little Arab boys will be taught to read and write, and to speak English. As time passes, and the condition of the Soudan improves, this may be expanded, if the funds admit, into a more technical course, and the 'new-caught sullen' students may learn simple engineering connected with irrigation and agriculture. Those who, in the enthusiasm of the hour, gave their money must not expose themselves to a disappointment by expecting that the Khartoum College is going to exert a powerful influence on the future of the Soudan or to greatly accelerate the process of developement. It will be an insignificant factor. But the sentiment does not perish, and the Gordon College may remain as a memorial of the famous envoy, as a monument of victory, and as an earnest expression of the warm-hearted philanthropy of our times.

Among the elements of unrest which should be excluded from the Soudan by the wisdom of its administrators, the colossal speculator must not be forgotten. The country is too poor to pay dividends yet. No return on capital invested in the Nile valley can be expected for at least twenty years; and it is to Lord Cromer's lasting credit that, in spite of the glittering promises of syndicates and financiers—schemes of great developement companies backed by many millions of money—he has steadfastly excluded any scheme by which the wealth of England should be drawn to the Soudan by false hopes and on false pretences, or to allow the natives, who have already suffered so much, to be exploited for the benefit of the Stock Exchange.

What should be avoided has been briefly discussed, and the question arises: What can be done? No heroic remedies can be considered. We have reached a period of small expedients and gradual improvement. Some wealth will come from Egypt—not by means of great companies with glowing prospectuses, 'watered' stock, and palpitating quotations—but from the individual enterprise of the *bonâ-fide* trader.

When it was decided to reconquer the Soudan, the news was received with gratification by the majority of the people of Egypt, and especially by those who had formerly traded with the lost provinces. The only objection the Opposition party could urge at the time was that the Soudan would be England's share of the conquest, and that Egypt would come out empty-handed. But now that a formal agreement has been made, and it is understood that Egypt is an equal partner in the Soudan with England, the people of Egypt expect a great deal from the reconquered territory. They are at present in an expectant attitude; and although the military operations have diverted money from reforms that were required in Egypt, and thus somewhat retarded the general progress, yet the Egyptians are on the whole glad that the Soudan has been regained. Further, patriotic Egyptians are deeply gratified at the courage and discipline shown by the Egyptian army. They now allude to the work of the army with pleasure, whereas a few years ago—owing to the defeats the Egyptian troops had sustained—the army was a topic to be avoided in conversation.

The consequence of these emotions is a distinct desire among the natives of Egypt to invest some proportion of their money in the Soudan. As soon as the close of the war was foreseen, many Egyptian merchants prepared to commence trading operations. They sent south as much merchandise as the railway would take, and made contracts with representatives possessing special knowledge to visit the country and conduct business on their behalf. Small companies were formed by natives and residents to buy produce on the Blue and White Niles, and to exchange it for goods that would be in demand in the Soudan. Other native companies sprang up to invest capital in land in the Soudan for agricultural purposes. It is even said by some who are acquainted with the feeling among the peasantry, in spite of the fact that the Egyptian dislikes change and is strongly attached to the soil of the Delta, that a large number of the *fellahin* would be prepared to emigrate to the Soudan if native capital were employed there.

All this feeling was unfortunately checked by the necessity for keeping the country closed until the establishment of comparative order and of some form of organised government. But there is reason to hope that its reappearance and growth in the future will provide the Soudan with a steady supply of wholesome nourishment.

After the Soudanese have been given peace, their next most important requisite is water. Sir William Garstin, in his report on the Soudan,[5] suggests

[5] Egypt, No. 5, 1899.

two simple and immediate expedients by which this want may be partially supplied. Firstly, the natives must be helped to rebuild their water-wheels and water-scoops, and may be encouraged to set up pumping machinery. The Government might safely advance small sums of money for these purposes, on the good security of the certain crop which must follow the union of the water and the soil. Secondly, the wells in the Ghezira are few and far between. Since they are shallow, they frequently run dry in summer. As they are not lined with masonry, they often fall in during the rains. Either contingency brings severe suffering upon the people who depend on them. The sinking of cheap masonry wells near the principal villages would be a great boon to the natives, and must be one of the first duties of the Administration.

I cannot refrain from touching on the tremendous schemes of irrigation which lie in the future. Let us take the Blue Nile first. This river flows through the most valuable part of the Soudan. 'The soil,' writes Sir William Garstin, 'is everywhere of the richest description.' Indeed, in climate and in soil the basin of the Blue Nile closely resembles the finest wheat-producing districts of India. There is, however, one serious difference. The Soudan has no winter rainfall. That she may produce vast crops of wheat this deficiency must be supplied by irrigation. Sir William Garstin propounds a scheme: 'The eastern half of the Ghezira and certain portions of the area lying to the east of the river might without difficulty be irrigated by means of canals taking off above a barrage constructed on the

Blue Nile at some suitable site between Rosaires and Sennar.'[6]

This would insure a plentiful winter supply of water, and a consequent abundant winter crop of wheat. If a summer supply were provided, the crop would be doubled. But a summer supply is a far more serious matter. To provide it, a reservoir instead of a simple barrage is necessary. Instead of catching the superabundance of flood-time, the actual flow of the river would be affected. The mind flies back to Egypt. Twelve hundred miles away the Egyptian peasant gasps for the water that the Soudanese would intercept. Not for this has Egypt conquered the Soudan. To protect herself from this at the hands of some European Power was indeed one of the first reasons of the war. It must be clearly recognised that civilised, densely populated Egypt has the prior right to the waters of the Nile. 'There must,' says Sir William Garstin, 'be a distinct understanding between the Governments of Egypt and the Soudan that all irrigation schemes of any magnitude projected for the latter country should be referred to the Minister of Public Works in Cairo before being put into execution. In all questions regarding the river it is imperative that the two countries should work together, and that the entire area watered by the Nile and its tributaries should be considered as one great whole; otherwise Egypt might one day find herself in a precisely similar situation as might result were an unfriendly Power holding the Soudan and the Upper Nile.'[7]

[6] Sir William Garstin's Report: Egypt, No. 5, 1899. [7] *Ibid.*

No scheme for giving perennial irrigation to the Blue Nile basin by means of a reservoir can be carried into effect for many years; but the provision of an efficient *winter* supply must be the first great enterprise of civilisation in the Soudan.

The case of the White Nile is wholly different. Let me again quote Sir William Garstin:

'It is impossible to imagine a greater contrast between two rivers than that existing between the Blue and White Niles. The former rushes down with a heavy slope and high velocity between high banks, with a comparatively narrow and deep section; at certain seasons it is almost dry, and at others it is bank-full; its waters are alternately clear and turbid, and its course is marked by sharp curves and bends. The latter flows sluggishly along, with a low velocity and slope; its course is generally straight, and its section wide and shallow; its banks are very low, and its supply very constant; the colour and limpidity of its water show very little change throughout the year, and the variation between the levels of high and low supply is very small.' [8]

On the White Nile irrigation, alike by barrage or by reservoir, is by reason of the flat slope almost impossible. It is difficult to accumulate or distribute the water. The water itself possesses no fertilising characteristics. The soil is poor, and the country desolate and dreary. Yet, although the White Nile seems to promise nothing to the lands through which it flows, it is the basis of all the future developements

[8] Sir William Garstin's Report: Egypt, No. 5, 1899.

of irrigation in the Soudan. Egypt could never have existed by the Blue Nile alone. But for the steady supply of water which the White Nile brings from the great lakes, the Nile north of Khartoum would become, like the Atbara, alternately a channel of stagnant pools and a furious torrent.

Now it appears that a terrible proportion of the precious water of the White Nile is lost in the marshes through which it flows. I revert to Sir William Garstin's report. In the great swamp district, which is certainly not less than one degree square, the river 'loses itself in a wilderness of weeds and rushes, the rank growth of which is fostered by the tropical rainfall and the intense damp heat which prevails in this region. Through these reeds and marshes wander winding channels of low slope and irregular section; the best known of these are the Bahr-el-Jebel and the Bahr-el-Zaraf, but there are probably many other smaller ones which lose themselves in the swamps. Throughout this immense area the great mass of water spilt, so to speak, from the overflow of the Upper Nile, is slowly but steadily moving to the north through the marshes and weeds, following the slope of the country. The shallowness of the depression, and the vast surface which it covers, render it, under the hot equatorial sun, an immense evaporating basin. Except in the main channels, the greater quantity of the water, which would otherwise flow to the north, is evaporated and lost. The aquatic plants which cover the surface, far from reducing the consumption of the water, increase it by the amount which they absorb and respire. . . .

If an increase in the supply is to be obtained, the lost river should be formed artificially into a river again by regulating its section and augmenting its velocity and its discharge. This can only be done by preventing it from spilling over into the different side channels and marshes, and confining its volume to one main artery. If this be possible, the immense mass of water annually lost by evaporation and other causes will flow steadily to the north in a single stream, and the summer supply of Egypt be increased by the amount thus gained.'

How great is the amount of water which might be gained? Sir William Garstin makes complicated calculations. He measures the volume of the river at Gondokoro before it reaches the marshes. He measures its volume at Khartoum after they are passed. He finds a tremendous leakage has taken place. He checks this by estimating the swamp area and multiplying by the rate of evaporation per square mile. Finally, he arrives at the conclusion that the loss cannot be less than half the present volume of the whole mean summer discharge at Assuan!

Now the argument steps forward: If the leakage on the White Nile can be stopped, there will be so much more water for Egypt that she will be able to spare as much as may be wanted for the perennial irrigation of the Blue Nile basin and have plenty for herself besides. Can it be wondered that Sir William Garstin appeals for 'the most serious study of this question'; for the appointment to the Soudan of a special Irrigation Officer; for experiments and investigations? The ingenious Mr. Willcocks has, indeed, already suggested

the planting of willows on each side of the channel and stopping the leakage by their interlacing roots. But all these proposals must be exhaustively examined. Above all, there is no hurry. The course to be pursued steadily, deliberately, and prudently, is clear. First of all, to establish law and order in the Soudan; then to borrow money, with the help of Egypt, on easy terms for the building of a barrage and subsidiary canals to provide for the winter irrigation of the Blue Nile basin; with the increase of wealth which shall gradually accrue from this investment, and aided by the growing resources of Egypt, to stop the leakage of the White Nile. The increase of water thus obtained by Egypt will render it possible to provide for the summer irrigation of the Blue Nile basin; the increase of wealth resulting from the increase of water may enable Egypt to assist with capital; and these gigantic enterprises may in their turn prove but the preliminaries of even mightier schemes, until at last nearly every drop of water which drains into the whole valley of the Nile, preserved from evaporation or discharge, shall be equally and amicably divided among the river-peoples—and the Nile itself, flowing for three thousand miles through smiling countries, shall perish gloriously and never reach the sea.

Railways must progress equally with irrigation. None of the great engineering works that have been outlined can be executed without them. The reader is familiar with the Desert Railway; and its extension, beyond the Atbara river and the Shabluka Cataract to Khartoum, links Cairo to Fashoda, at all seasons of the year, by an unbroken chain of rail and river. How soon

it will be possible to connect this great line of communication with the growing systems of South Africa is a question which concerns experts. It is sufficient for plain people to perceive that such a junction is certain. When the railway which owes its extension to the earnest enthusiasm of Mr. Cecil Rhodes reaches the southern shore of Lake Tanganyika—an event expected within the next four years—the final result will be nearly attained, and no great interval will elapse before the Dark Continent is slashed from end to end with an uninterrupted highway for steam traffic.

But this scheme, although it must exert a powerful fascination upon the educated mind, has no immediate connection with the Soudan. The most important railway project in that sphere is undoubtedly a line which shall connect the Red Sea and the Blue Nile, and tap that region which, enriched by the winter irrigation, will become one of the great granaries of the world. It would not at present be fair to Egypt to divert the trade of the Soudan from the Nile Valley to the Red Sea. The Egyptians have as a people made great sacrifices to reconquer the Soudan, and they have need of all that they have won. Lord Cromer, recognising this, has placed the connection of Gedaref with Khartoum as an enterprise to be undertaken before any attempt is made to join Gedaref to the coast.

'It will be desirable,' he wrote in his annual report for 1899, 'as soon as the railway reaches Khartoum to make arrangements for its extension to Abu Haraz, with a view to its ultimately reaching

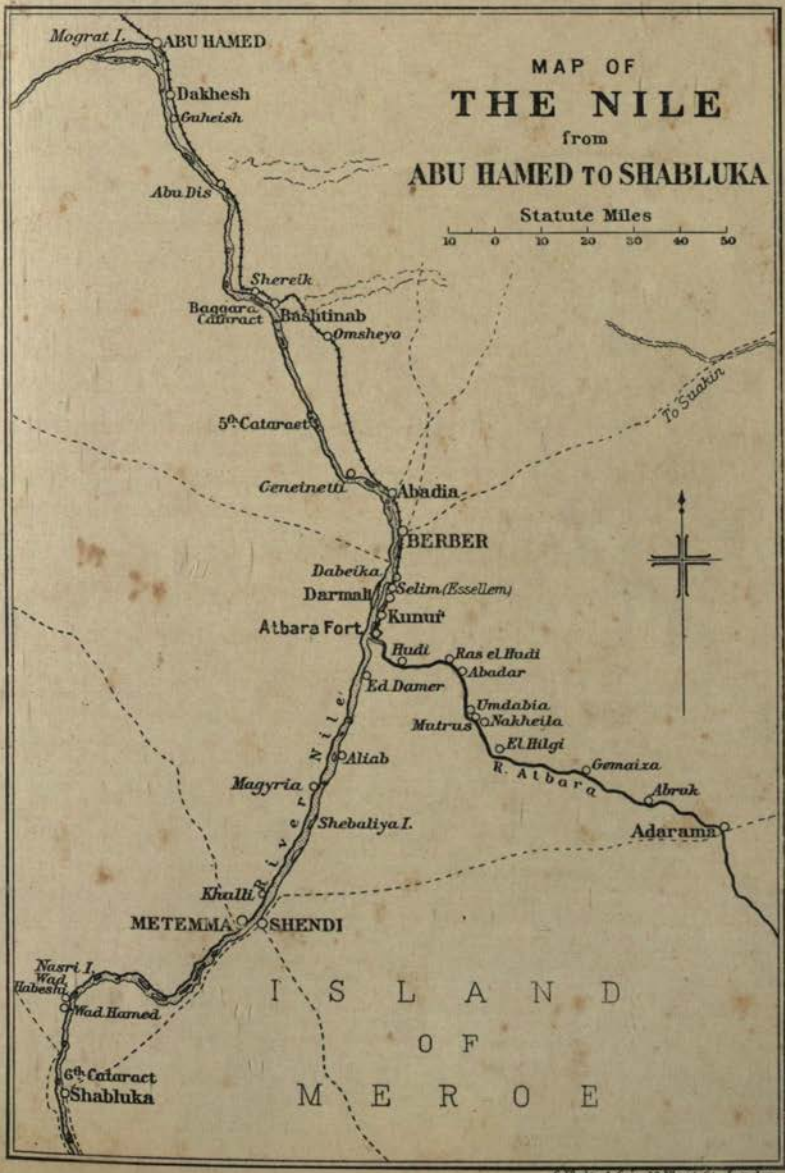
Gedaref.'[9] It is anticipated that Abu Haraz will be reached in 1900. Beyond that the Administrator does not care to look. 'I venture to think that for the present this programme is sufficient.'[10] The remark may recall us from the dreams of the future to the embarrassments of the present.

Whatever may be its ultimate fortune, it is certain that the Soudan must for many years be a heavy charge upon the Egyptian revenues. Sir William Garstin writes with chilling moderation: 'If, however, in a generation—or even two—the water-supply of Egypt can be permanently increased by the removal of the *sudd* and by the control of the waters of the Upper Nile; if, moreover, the fertile tracts adjoining the Blue Nile can be turned into a large wheat-producing area; these two results will fully warrant the expenditure incurred in money and in life, and neither England nor Egypt will have cause to regret the reconquest of the Soudan.'[11]

In the meanwhile the prospect which must be faced is scarcely inviting. Egypt—still weak from her own misfortunes, and needing a long period of recuperation at the waters of Philæ—has been called upon to make great exertions to help the Soudan. Her resources are strained to the utmost. Until she is strengthened by the acquisition of the Assuan reservoir her condition is lamentably weak. Worse difficulties impend. In the year 1904 the first annual instalment for the Great Dam will become due. That is to say, before she derives any advantage

[9] Egypt, No. 3, 1899. [10] *Ibid.* [11] Egypt, No. 5, 1899.

from the Irrigation Works, and while still burdened with the Soudan deficit of nearly £400,000 a year, Egypt will be called upon to pay £160,000 a year for the Reservoirs. It must also be remembered that under the oppressive financial restrictions Egypt is compelled to raise by taxation one pound for the service of the debt for every pound she spends in excess of the authorised expenditure; and as this latter charge exceeds the fixed limit, an additional burden of £320,000 must be imposed upon the struggling people of the Delta. Four years of difficulty will be followed by two years of actual crisis; and those able men whose reputations are involved in the fortunes of Egypt regard the near future with keen anxiety. But they are united in their opinion of the course to be pursued. To 'persevere and trust Cromer' is the watchword of the Englishman in Egypt. Few men are indispensable; yet it is accepted as axiomatic, that everything depends upon the great Administrator. With time—that first essential of all Egyptian politics—and a free hand, Cromer will, if his life be spared, overcome the difficulties and crises of the next six years as he has surmounted those of the past fifteen. Then the worst will be over. The lean years will be followed by the fat. The Soudan will cost less and less; the Reservoirs will pay more and more; and Egypt, invigorated and triumphant, will step forward on the path of progress and prosperity, leading by the hand the provinces reconquered in the River War.


MAP OF
THE NILE
from
ABU HAMED TO SHABLUKA
Statute Miles
10 0 10 20 30 40 50
Mograt I.
ABU HAMED
Dakhesh
Guheish
Abu Dis
Shereik
Baggara Cataract
Bashtinab
Omsheya
5th Cataract
To Suakin
Geneinetti
Abadia
BERBER
Dabeika
Darmali
Selim (Esselem)
Kunur
Atbara Fort
Hudi
Ras el Hudi
Abadar
Ed Damer
Umdabia
Nakheila
Matras
El Hilgi
Gemaiza
R. Atbara
Abrak
Adarama
Nile
Aliab
Magyria
Shebaliya I.
River
Khalli
METEMMA
SHENDI
Nasri I.
Wad Habeshi
Wad Hamed
6th Cataract
Shabluka
ISLAND
OF
MEROE
G. Philip & Son, 32 Fleet St., London.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

STAFF

THE SUAKIN FIELD FORCE, 1896

INDIAN CONTINGENT AT SUAKIN, 1896

DONGOLA EXPEDITIONARY FORCE, 1898

NILE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE, 1898

KORDOFAN FIELD FORCE, 1899

INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT

RAILWAY DEPARTMENT

SUPPLY AND TRANSPORT

SUAKIN FIELD FORCE, 1896

Commanding . .	Lieut.-Col. G. E. Lloyd, D.S.O.	S. Staff. Regt.
Chief Staff Officer .	Captain T. Souter . .	Black Watch
Brigade Major . .	Captain S. F. Judge, D.S.O.	Shropshire Light Infantry
Staff Officer, Intelligence	Captain M. A. C. B. Fenwick	R. Sussex Regt.
Principal Med. Officer	Captain H. N. Dunn . .	R.A.M.C.
Commanding Tokar Column	Major H. M. Sidney . .	D.C.L.I.

INDIAN CONTINGENT AT SUAKIN, 1896

Commanding . .	Col. (Brig.-Gen.) C. C. Egerton, C.B., D.S.O.	I.S.C.
Dep. Assistant Adj. and Qrmr. Gen.	Major E. A. Travers . .	I.S.C.
Intelligence Dept. .	Captain A. Bower . .	I.S.C.
Brigade Major .	Major E. de Brett . .	I.S.C.
Brigade Transport Officer	Captain G. L. Steele . .	I.S.C.
Chief Commissariat Officer	Major C. R. A. Bond . .	I.S.C.
Assistant Commissariat Officer	Lieutenant J. H. Dickson .	I.S.C.
Field Engineer	Major S. Grant . . .	R.E.
Asst. Field Engineer.	Lieutenant A. G. Bremner.	R.E.
Asst. Field Engineer.	Lieutenant A. Gardiner .	R.E.

DONGOLA EXPEDITIONARY FORCE, 1896

Headquarters Staff

Sirdar, Commanding Expeditionary Force	Brev.-Col. (temp. Maj.-Gen.) Sir H. H. Kitchener, C.B., K.C.M.G.	R.E.
Aide-de-Camp . .	Captain J. K. Watson . .	K.R.R.C.
Aide-de-Camp . .	Lieut. Lord E. H. Cecil .	Grenadier Grds.

DONGOLA EXPEDITIONARY FORCE, 1896—*continued*

Headquarters Staff—continued

Adjutant-General (Chief of the Staff)	Brev.-Col. H. M. L. Rundle, C.M.G., D.S.O.	R.A.
Assistant Adjutant-General	Major C. G. Martyr . .	D.C.L.I.
Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-Gen. (A)	Lieut. G. F. Gorringe .	R.E.
Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-Gen. (B)	(Hon. Capt.) Qrmr. W. H. Drage	A.S.C.
Commanding Lines of Communications	Lieut.-Col. W. F. D. Cochrane	h.p.
Principal Medical Officer	Surg.-Lieut.-Col. T. J. Gallwey, M.D.	A.M.S.
Principal Veterinary Surgeon	Vet.-Capt. G. R. Griffith .	A.V.D.

Divisional Staff

Commanding Infantry Division	Brev.-Col. A. Hunter, D.S.O.	R. Lanc. Regt.
Asst. Adjutant-Gen. .	Capt. T. E. Hickman, D.S.O.	Worc. Regiment
Dep.-Asst. Adj.-Gen. .	Captain H. G. Fitton, p.s.c.	R. Berks Regt.
Staff Officer . .	Lieut. J. H. G. Lord Athlumney	Coldstream Gds.
Officer Commdg., R.E.	Captain W. F. Kincaid .	R.E.

Brigade Staff

Commanding 1st Brigade	Major D. F. Lewis . .	Cheshire Regt.
Commanding 2nd Brigade	Major H. A. MacDonald .	Royal Fusileers
Commanding 3rd Brigade	Brev.-Major J. G. Maxwell, D.S.O.	Black Watch
Commanding 4th Brigade	Brev.-Major E. F. David .	R.M.L.I.
Brigade Major, 1st Brigade	Captain F. G. Nason . .	Scottish Rifles
Brigade Major, 2nd Brigade	Captain B. R. Mitford .	E. Surrey Regt.
Brigade Major, 3rd Brigade	Captain H. T. Godden . .	Bedfordsh. Regt.
Brigade Major, 4th Brigade	Captain S. F. Judge, D.S.O.	Shropshire L.I.

NILE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE, 1897–8

Headquarters Staff

Sirdar, Commanding Expeditiony. Force	Major-Gen. Sir Herbert H. Kitchener, K.C.B., K.C.M.G.	R.E.
Aide-de-Camp . .	Captain J. K. Watson, D.S.O.	K.R.R.C.
Aide-de-Camp . .	Brevet-Major Lord E. H. Cecil	Grenadier Grds.
Aide-de-Camp . .	Lieut. Hon. F. H. S. Roberts	K.R.R.C.
Financial Secretary	Captain W. E. O'Leary, p.s.c.	R. Irish Rifles
Staff Officer . .	Second Lieut. W. E. Bailey	E. Lanc. Regt.
Adj.-Gen., Chief of Staff, and Commdg. Lines of Communication	Major-Gen. H. M. L. Rundle, C.M.G., D.S.O.	R.A.
Assistant Adjutant-General	Brevet-Lieut.-Col. G. W. Hackett Pain	Worc. Regiment
Assistant Adjutant-General	Major A. E. Sandbach .	R.E.
Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-Gen. (A)	Lieut. G. F. Gorringe, D.S.O.	R.E.
Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-Gen. (B)	Captain C. E. G. Blunt .	A.S.C.
Principal Med. Officer	Lieut.-Col. T. J. Gallwey, M.D., C.B.	R.A.M.C.
Principal Vet. Surgeon	Vet.-Captain G. R. Griffith, D.S.O.	A.V.D.

Divisional Staffs (British Division)

Commanding British Division	Major.-Gen. W. F. Gatacre, C.B.	—
Aide-de-Camp . .	Captain R. G. Brooke . .	7th Hussars
Extra Aide-de-Camp .	Lieut. E. Cox . . .	Seaforth Hghlrs.
Orderly Officer . .	Lieut. W. D. Ingle . .	Middlesex Regt.
Dep.-Asst. Adj.-Gen. .	Major F. S. Robb . .	h.p.
Dep.-Asst. Adj.-Gen. .	Major H. M. Sargent . .	A.S.C.
Chaplains . . .	Rev. R. Brindle (R.C.) .	C.F.
	Rev. J. M. Simms (Presb.) .	C.F.
	Rev. A. W. B. Watson (C.E.)	C.F.
	Rev. O. S. Watkins . .	C.F.
Principal Med. Officer	Lieut.-Col. McNamara .	R.A.M.C.
Chief Paymaster .	Major W. C. Minchin . .	A.P.D.
Assistant Paymaster .	Captain A. G. Smith . .	A.P.D.

NILE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE, 1897–8—*continued*

Attached to the Staff of the Sirdar

Dep.-Asst. Adj.-Gen.	Captain Sir H. Rawlinson, Bart.	Coldstream Grds.
ep.-Asst. Adj.-Gen.	Captain E. E. Bernard	A.S.C.
Principal Med. Officer	Surg.-Gen. W. Taylor, M.D.	R.A.M.C.
Secretary to Principal Medical Officer	Major E. M. Wilson	R.A.M.C.
Senior Ordnance Store Officer	Lieut.-Col. T. Heron	A.O.D.
Senior Vet. Officer	Vet.-Capt. L. J. Blenkinsop	A.V.D.
General Duty	Major L. G. Drummond	Scots Guards
General Duty	Captain E. W. Blunt	R.A.

British Brigade Staffs

1st Brigade

Commanding 1st British Brigade	Col. (Brig.-Gen.) A. G. Wauchope, C.B.	Black Watch
Aide-de-Camp	Captain J. G. Rennie	Black Watch
Brigade Major	Major T. D'O. Snow	R. Innis. Fus.
Principal Med. Officer	Lieut.-Col. A. T. Sloggett	R.A.M.C.

2nd Brigade

Commanding 2nd British Brigade	Col. (Brig.-Gen.) Hon. N. G. Lyttelton, C.B.	—
Aide-de-Camp	Captain D. Henderson	Arg. and Suth. Highlanders
Orderly Officer	Lieut. H. M. Grenfell	1st L.G.
Brigade Major	Major C. a'Court	Rifle Brigade
Principal Med. Officer	Lieut.-Col. G. A. Hughes	R.A.M.C.

Divisional Staff—Egyptian Army

Commanding Infantry Division	Major-Gen. A. Hunter, D.S.O.	—
Asst. Adj.-Gen. and Officer Comdg. R.E.	Major W. H. F. S. Kincaid	R.E.
Dep.-Asst. Adj.-Gen.	Captain H. G. Fitton, D.S.O.	R. Berks Regt.
Staff Officer	Major B. R. Mitford	E. Surrey Regt.
Staff Officer	Lieut. H. A. Micklem	R.E.

NILE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE, 1897-8—*continued*

Brigade Staffs—Egyptian Army

Commanding 1st Brigade	Brevet-Lieut.-Col. H. A. MacDonald, C.B., D.S.O.	R. Fusileers
Commanding 2nd Brigade	Brevet-Lieut.-Col. J. G. Maxwell, D.S.O.	—
Commanding 3rd Brigade	Brevet-Lieut.-Col. D. T. Lewis	Cheshire Regt.
Commanding 4th Brigade	Brev.-Lieut.-Col. J. Collinson	Northamptonshire Regt.
Brigade Major, 1st Brigade	Brev.-Major C. E. Keith-Falconer	Northumberland Fusileers
Brigade Major, 2nd Brigade	Major F. I. Maxse . .	Coldstream Gds.
Brigade Major, 3rd Brigade	Captain J. J. Asser . .	Dorset Regt.
Brigade Major, 4th Brigade	Captain O. H. Pedley, p.s.c. .	Connaught Rgs.

KORDOFAN FIELD FORCE, 1899

Commanding . .	Lieut.-Col. F. W. Kitchener	W. Yorks Regt.
Asst. Adjutant-Gen. .	Lieut.-Col. B. R. Mitford .	E. Surrey Regt.
Dep.-Asst. Adj.-Gen. .	Major E. J. C. Williams .	Buffs
Intelligence . .	Lieut. F. Burges . .	Gloucs. Regt.
Transport . . .	Lieut. J. F. Wolseley . .	Chesh. Regt.

INTELLIGENCE DEPARTMENT

Director of Military Intelligence	Brev.-Major F. R. Wingate, C.B., D.S.O.	R.A.
Asst. Director of Military Intelligence	Colonel Slatin Pasha .	—
Intelligence Staff .	Captain N. M. Smyth . .	2nd D.G.
Intelligence Staff .	Major Hon. M. G. Talbot, p.s.c.	R.E.
Intelligence Staff .	Lieut. A. E. Viscount Fincastle	16th Lancers

RAILWAY STAFF

Director . . .	Lieut. E. P. C. Girouard, D.S.O.	R.E.
Staff . . .	Lieut. G. B. Macaulay .	R.E.
	Lieut. R. Polwhele . .	R.E.
	Lieut. E. H. S. Cator . .	R.E.
	Lieut. A. G. Stevenson .	R.E.
	Lieut. H. L. Pritchard .	R.E.
	Lieut. G. C. M. Hall . .	R.E.
	Lieut. E. C. Midwinter .	R.E.
	Lieut. E. O. A. Newcombe .	R.E.
	Lieut. W. R. G. Wollen .	R.E.

SUPPLY AND TRANSPORT

Director of Supplies .	Lieut.-Col. J. Rogers, C.B..	A.S.C.
Director of Stores .	Major W. Staveley Gordon	R.E.
Supply Officers . .	Captain F. J. L. Howard .	A.S.C.
	Lieut. H. G. A. Garsia .	A.S.C.
	Lieut. W. S. Swabey . .	A.S.C.
Director of Transport	Lieut.-Col. F. W. Kitchener, p.s.c.	W. Yorks Regt.
Transport Officers	Captain E. C. J. Williams .	Buffs
	Second Lieut. T. H. Healey	Cameron Hghlrs.
	Second Lieut. C. McKey .	Middlesex Regt.
	Second Lieut. S. K. Flint .	R. Irish Rifles

APPENDIX B

RECOMMENDATIONS IN DESPATCHES

I. AFTER THE DONGOLA EXPEDITION

FROM THE DESPATCH OF MAJOR-GENERAL SIR HERBERT KITCHENER

(*Published in the 'London Gazette,' November 3rd*, 1896)

The detachments attached to the Maxim Battery took part in all operations against the enemy during the campaign, and were always well to the front; their commanding officer, CAPTAIN LAWRIE, R.A., speaks in the highest terms of their good service and excellent conduct on all occasions, and I have the great pleasure of endorsing his opinion of their efficiency and great utility throughout the operations.

During the outbreak of cholera, and in the subsequent advance on Dongola, SURGEON-MAJOR SLOGGETT, assisted by the other medical officers attached to the British troops, worked with great zeal and energy in the performance of his duties, which were exceptionally onerous throughout the campaign.

The supply department was ably represented by CAPTAIN MORGAN, Army Service Corps.

The REV. J. BRINDLE, senior chaplain, was, as usual, conspicuous in his unfailing kindness and devotion to his duties.

I also beg to bring to your notice the excellent conduct of the Indian Contingent at Suakin under the command of BRIGADIER-GENERAL EGERTON, C.B., D.S.O. These troops garrisoned Suakin through an exceptionally trying summer, during which they thoroughly prepared themselves for taking the field; circumstances unfortunately prevented them from participating in active operations, but they rendered us valuable assistance by the moral effect of their presence, and had an opportunity occurred they would, I feel sure, have greatly distinguished themselves.

I beg also to recommend for favourable consideration the names of the following officers :—

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL T. CURRIE, commanding 1st Battalion, North Staffordshire Regiment.

MAJOR MORTIMER, North Staffordshire Regiment.

CAPTAIN MARWOOD (Adjutant), North Staffordshire Regiment.

LIEUTENANT ELKINGTON, Royal Engineers.

LIEUTENANT GOLDFINCH, North Staffordshire Regiment, attached to Maxim Battery.

LIEUTENANT BLUNT, Connaught Rangers, attached to Maxim Battery.

It is now my pleasant duty to record the services of those officers attached to the Egyptian Army who have specially distinguished themselves.

COLONEL A. HUNTER, D.S.O. (Royal Lancaster Regiment), second in command Egyptian Army, ably commanded the Infantry Division. I have already referred to his services in connection with the successful passage of the steamers over the cataracts, and I have to record my very high appreciation of his military capacity and to gratefully acknowledge the valuable assistance he has given me on every occasion throughout the campaign.

In COLONEL RUNDLE, C.M.G., D.S.O. (Royal Artillery), I had a thoroughly efficient Chief of the Staff; his previous experience as Adjutant-General of the Egyptian Army rendered him specially fitted for the post, the duties of which he has performed with great ability. The peculiar nature of the campaign rendered his task an arduous one, and the numerous difficulties as they occurred were met by him with that same care and forethought which characterised his work throughout the campaign. He was ably assisted in Quartermaster-General's duties by LIEUTENANT GORRINGE (Royal Engineers), whose resource and energy have been conspicuous throughout.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL COCHRANE (half-pay) was employed on the lines of communication, and worked with energy in pushing forward the supplies.

I have already referred to the part taken by (temporary) LIEUTENANT-COLONEL LLOYD, D.S.O., in the operations near Suakin, where he ably commanded. In spite of ill-health this officer remained at his post at Suakin during the summer, and gave me great assistance as governor of that district.

The Intelligence Department was ably administered by MAJOR

F. R. WINGATE, C.B., D.S.O., who gave me all the information necessary for the conduct of the campaign, the successful result of which was greatly furthered by the thorough knowledge acquired by the department of every detail of the enemy's plans and positions. COLONEL SLATIN PASHA, C.B. (Assistant Director of Military Intelligence), by his great and unique experience of the Soudan and his intimate knowledge of the character and intentions of the people, was able to render invaluable assistance throughout the campaign.

The extreme responsibility of keeping up the supplies of the force on so extended a line of communications, and the manner in which this onerous duty was performed, fully justified my previous high opinion of the ability of LIEUTENANT-COLONEL ROGERS (Director of Supplies), who was ably seconded by QUARTERMASTER (Hon. Capt.) W. H. DRAGE.

The transport was very capably administered by MAJOR F. W. KITCHENER, Director of Transport (West Yorkshire Regiment), and the loss in camels has been exceptionally small, considering the hard work, severe heat, and difficult nature of the country through which the operations were conducted; this was largely due to the camel saddle invented by VETERINARY-CAPTAIN GRIFFITH and constructed by CAPTAIN GORDON, Royal Engineers.

CAPTAIN GORDON, Director of Stores (Royal Engineers), gave me the greatest assistance in keeping the material of the army in an efficient state during this extended campaign, in which wear and tear were unusually severe. The supplies of railway and gunboat material were forwarded to the front under his direction with the utmost despatch and care.

The resources of SURGEON-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL T. J. GALLWEY (Principal Medical Officer), and the six British medical officers of the Egyptian Army, were strained to the utmost in coping with the sudden and unexpected outbreak of cholera amongst the troops. Owing to the prevalence of the epidemic in Egypt, all hope of assistance from there was cut off, and it was only by their untiring energy and incessant devotion to duty that the disease was successfully stamped out and many valuable lives saved, though I regret to record the loss by cholera of one of their number, SURGEON-CAPTAIN TRASK.

All officers of the Medical Staff worked indefatigably throughout the various other phases of the campaign.

The railway and telegraph services were very efficiently performed under the respective direction of LIEUTENANT GIROUARD, Director of Railways (Royal Engineers), and LIEUTENANT MANIFOLD, Staff Officer of Telegraphs (Royal Engineers). The construction of 110 miles of railway and 250 miles of telegraph during the very trying summer, and in difficult country, involved much labour and constant supervision on the part of these officers and their assistants.

The labours of the Veterinary Department were also exceptionally heavy, and were efficiently carried out under the able direction of VETERINARY-CAPTAIN GRIFFITH, Principal Veterinary Surgeon.

My thanks and appreciation of their services are also specially due to my two Aides-de-Camp, CAPTAIN J. K. WATSON, King's Royal Rifle Corps, and LIEUTENANT LORD E. H. CECIL, Grenadier Guards.

List of officers whose services are deserving of special mention:—

Cavalry

MAJOR J. F. BURN MURDOCH, 1st Dragoons, Commanding Eastern Cavalry.
CAPTAIN N. LEGGE, 20th Hussars, Wing Commander.
CAPTAIN R. G. BROADWOOD, 12th Lancers, Wing Commander.
CAPTAIN B. T. MAHON, 8th Hussars, Staff-Officer.
CAPTAIN R. H. ADAMS, 2nd Dragoons, Squadron Commander.
CAPTAIN W. E. PEYTON, 15th Hussars, Squadron Commander.
CAPTAIN E. Y. MCMAHON, 1st Dragoon Guards, Staff Officer, special service.
CAPTAIN V. G. WHITLA, 2nd Dragoon Guards, Squadron Commander, special service.
CAPTAIN W. H. PERSSE, 2nd Dragoon Guards, Squadron Commander, special service.
CAPTAIN N. M. SMYTH (attached Intelligence Department), special service.

Royal Artillery

BREVET-COLONEL H. M. L. RUNDLE, C.M.G., D.S.O., Chief of Staff.
MAJOR (temporary LIEUT.-COLONEL) C. S. B. PARSONS, Commanding Egyptian Artillery.
BREVET-MAJOR F. R. WINGATE, C.B., D.S.O., Director of Military Intelligence.
CAPTAIN N. E. YOUNG, Commanding Horse Battery.
CAPTAIN C. E. LAWRIE, Commanding Maxim Battery.
CAPTAIN M. PEAKE, Commanding Field Battery.

CAPTAIN H. OLDFIELD, Royal Marine Artillery, Commanding a Gunboat.
BREVET-MAJOR G. E. BENSON, Brigade Major Mounted Corps (until invalided), special service.
CAPTAIN C. H. DE ROUGEMONT, Commanding a Gunboat, special service.

Royal Engineers

CAPTAIN W. F. H. S. KINCAID, Assistant Adjutant-General, Infantry Division.
CAPTAIN W. S. GORDON, Director of Stores.
LIEUTENANT E. P. C. GIROUARD, Director of Railways.
LIEUTENANT A. G. STEVENSON, Railway Staff.
LIEUTENANT R. POLWHELE (since dead), Railway Staff.
LIEUTENANT M. G. E. MANIFOLD, Staff Officer of Telegraphs.
LIEUTENANT E. H. S. CATOR, General Duty.
BREVET-MAJOR A. G. HUNTER WESTON, General Duty, special service.
LIEUTENANT H. L. PRITCHARD, General Duty, special service.
LIEUTENANT R. BLAKENEY, General Duty, special service.

Infantry

BREVET-COLONEL A. HUNTER, D.S.O., Royal Lancashire Regiment, Commanding Infantry Division.
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL W. F. D. COCHRANE, h.p., lines of communication.
MAJOR (temporary LIEUTENANT-COLONEL) G. E. LLOYD, D.S.O., South Staffordshire Regiment, Governor Suakin District.
BREVET-MAJOR J. G. MAXWELL, D.S.O., Royal Highlanders, commanding 3rd Infantry Brigade.
BREVET-MAJOR B. F. DAVID, Royal Marine Light Infantry, commanding 4th Infantry Brigade.
MAJOR H. A. MACDONALD, D.S.O., Royal Fusileers, commanding 2nd Infantry Brigade.
CAPTAIN (local and temporary MAJOR) H. W. JACKSON, Gordon Highlanders, commanding XIth Soudanese.
MAJOR G. W. H. PAIN, Worcester Regiment, commanding IXth Soudanese.
MAJOR J. COLLINSON, Northamptonshire Regiment, commanding XIIIth Soudanese.
BREVET-MAJOR C. V. F. TOWNSHEND, C.B., Indian Service Corps, commanding XIIth Soudanese.
CAPTAIN (temporary MAJOR) J. SILLEM, Welsh Regiment, commanding 3rd Battalion.
CAPTAIN (temporary MAJOR) R. H. G. HEYGATE, Border Regiment, commanding 1st Battalion.
CAPTAIN (temporary MAJOR) R. J. TUDWAY, Essex Regiment, commanding Camel Corps.
CAPTAIN (temporary MAJOR) H. M. SIDNEY, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, commanding XIth Soudanese.

CAPTAIN (temporary MAJOR) H. P. SHEKLETON, South Lancashire Regiment, commanding 2nd Battalion.
CAPTAIN (temporary MAJOR) W. S. SPARKES, Welsh Regiment, commanding 4th Battalion.
CAPTAIN (temporary MAJOR) T. E. HICKMAN, D.S.O., Worcester Regiment, Assistant Adjutant-General Infantry Division (until invalided).
CAPTAIN F. J. NASON, Scottish Rifles, Brigade Major 1st Brigade.
CAPTAIN V. T. BUNBURY, Leicestershire Regiment, XIIIth Soudanese.
CAPTAIN H. T. GODDEN, Bedfordshire Regiment, Brigade Major 3rd Brigade.
CAPTAIN F. J. PINK, D.S.O., Royal West Surrey Regiment, 3rd Battalion.
CAPTAIN L. ST. C. NICHOLSON, Liverpool Regiment, 4th Battalion.
CAPTAIN ST. G. C. HENRY, Northumberland Fusileers, Camel Corps.
CAPTAIN D. G. PRENDERGAST, South Lancashire Regiment, Xth Soudanese.
CAPTAIN S. F. JUDGE, D.S.O., Shropshire Light Infantry, Brigade Major, 4th Brigade.
CAPTAIN F. G. ANLEY, Essex Regiment, 2nd Battalion.
CAPTAIN C. E. KEITH-FALCONER, Northumberland Fusileers, XIIIth Soudanese.
CAPTAIN A. F. KING, Royal Lancashire Regiment, Camel Corps.
CAPTAIN J. R. O'CONNELL, Shropshire Light Infantry, 3rd Battalion.
CAPTAIN H. G. FITTON, Royal Berkshire Regiment, Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General, Infantry Division.
CAPTAIN J. K. WATSON, King's Royal Rifle Corps, Aide-de-Camp.
CAPTAIN E. A. STANTON, Oxfordshire Light Infantry, XIth Soudanese.
CAPTAIN R. S. WEBBER, Royal Welsh Fusileers, XIIth Soudanese.
CAPTAIN L. F. GREEN WILKINSON, Rifle Brigade, Camel Corps.
CAPTAIN C. FERGUSSON, Grenadier Guards, Xth Soudanese.
CAPTAIN M. A. C. B. FENWICK, Royal Sussex Rifles (since dead), Xth Soudanese.
LIEUTENANT F. M. CARLETON, Royal Lancaster Regiment, 4th Battalion.
LIEUTENANT H. H. F. FARMER, King's Royal Rifle Corps (since dead), XIIIth Soudanese.
LIEUTENANT E. G. T. BAINBRIDGE, East Kent Regiment, 1st Battalion.
LIEUTENANT G. DE H. SMITH, Indian Staff Corps, XIth Soudanese.
LIEUTENANT E. P. STRICKLAND, Norfolk Regiment, 2nd Battalion.
LIEUTENANT H. V. RAVENSCROFT, Manchester Regiment, IXth Soudanese.
LIEUTENANT H. C. B. HOPKINSON, Seaforth Highlanders, XIIth Soudanese.
LIEUTENANT A. R. HOSKINS, North Staffordshire Regiment, IXth Soudanese.

Special Service

SECOND LIEUTENANT T. H. HEALEY, Cameron Highlanders, Transport Department.
MAJOR D. F. LEWIS, Cheshire Regiment, Commanding 1st Infantry Brigade.

MAJOR F. W. KITCHENER, West Yorkshire Regiment, Director of Transport.
BREVET-MAJOR E. R. OWEN, D.S.O., Lancashire Fusileers (since dead), with Irregulars.
BREVET-MAJOR A. B. THURSTON, Oxfordshire Light Infantry, with Irregulars.
MAJOR C. G. MARTYR, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, Assistant Adjutant-General, Headquarters Staff.
MAJOR W. R. T. WALLACE, Gloucester Regiment, Commanding 15th Battalion.
CAPTAIN L. C. SHERER, Leicester Regiment, Transport Department.
CAPTAIN B. R. MITFORD, Surrey Regiment, Brigade Major 2nd Brigade.
CAPTAIN S. WILLCOCK, Gloucester Regiment, 15th Battalion.
CAPTAIN E. M. JACKSON, Indian Staff Corps, XIth Soudanese.
LIEUTENANT J. H. G. M. LORD ATHLUMNEY, Coldstream Guards, Staff Officer, Infantry Division.
LIEUTENANT E. FITZCLARENCE, Dorset Regiment, Xth Soudanese.
LIEUTENANT LORD E. H. CECIL, Grenadier Guards, Aide-de-Camp.

Army Service Corps

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL J. ROGERS, Director of Supplies.
QUARTERMASTER (HON. CAPTAIN) W. H. DRAGE, Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General, Headquarters Staff.
LIEUTENANT C. E. G. BLUNT, Staff Officer of Supplies.
LIEUTENANT F. J. L. HOWARD, Staff Officer of Supplies.

Medical Staff

SURGEON-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL J. GALLWEY, M.D., Principal Medical Officer.
SURGEON-MAJOR G. D. HUNTER, Senior Medical Officer.
SURGEON-CAPTAIN R. H. PENTON, Medical Staff.
SURGEON-CAPTAIN H. E. H. SMITH, Medical Staff.
SURGEON-CAPTAIN C. S. SPONG, Medical Staff.
SURGEON-CAPTAIN H. N. DUNN, M.B., Medical Staff.
SURGEON-CAPTAIN J. E. TRASK, Medical Staff (since dead).

Veterinary Department

VETERINARY-CAPTAIN G. R. GRIFFITH, Principal Veterinary Surgeon.
VETERINARY-LIEUTENANT W. D. SMITH, special service.

List of Warrant Officers and Non-commissioned Officers deserving of mention :—

STAFF SERGEANT-MAJOR W. E. BAILEY, Army Service Corps, Egyptian Army.
SQUADRON SERGEANT-MAJOR BLAKE, 17th Lancers, Egyptian Army.

COLOUR-SERGEANT MCKEY, Grenadier Guards, Egyptian Army.
COLOUR-SERGEANT FLINT, Dorset Regiment, Egyptian Army.
COLOUR-SERGEANT KELHAM, East Kent Regiment, Egyptian Army.
SERGEANT BUCKINGHAM, Grenadier Guards, Egyptian Army.
SERGEANT RUSSELL, Grenadier Guards, Egyptian Army.
SERGEANT BROCKWAY, Grenadier Guards, Egyptian Army.
SERGEANT F. EDE, Royal Marine Artillery, special service.

(Signed) HERBERT KITCHENER, Sirdar.

II. AFTER ABU HAMED

THE DESPATCH OF MAJOR-GENERAL SIR HERBERT KITCHENER

(*Published in the 'London Gazette,' January 25th*, 1898)

Cairo: December 9th, 1897.

SIR,—I have the honour to report that on the 15th of July, the construction of the railway from Wady Halfa having been pushed almost half-way across the desert towards Abu Hamed, I deemed it inadvisable to continue the work until the Dervishes had been expelled from that position, which information led me to believe the Khalifa was about to reinforce. In order, therefore, to seize Abu Hamed and, at the same time, to cover the passage of the gunboats over the Fourth Cataract, I despatched from Kassingar on the 29th of July a flying column under the command of MAJOR-GENERAL A. HUNTER, D.S.O., consisting of:—

A detachment of cavalry.

No. 2 Field Battery under BREVET-MAJOR N. E. YOUNG (Royal Artillery).

A Brigade of Infantry under BREVET-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL H. A. MACDONALD, C.B., D.S.O. (Royal Fusileers), with CAPTAIN C. E. KEITH-FALCONER (Northumberland Fusileers) as Brigade-Major, composed of:—

3rd Battalion Egyptians, under BREVET-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL J. SILLEM (Welsh Regiment), CAPTAIN A. BLEWITT (King's Royal Rifle Corps), Second in Command.

IXth Battalion Soudanese, under LIEUTENANT H. V. RAVENS-

CROFT (Manchester Regiment), LIEUTENANT A. R. HOSKINS (North Staffordshire Regiment), Second in Command.

Xth Battalion Soudanese, under BREVET-MAJOR H. M. SIDNEY (Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry), CAPTAIN C. FERGUSSON (Grenadier Guards), Second in Command.

XIth Battalion Soudanese, under CAPTAIN V. T. BUNBURY (Leicestershire Regiment), LIEUTENANT G. DE H. SMITH (Indian Staff Corps), Second in Command.

In charge of Transport, SECOND LIEUTENANT T. H. HEALEY (Cameron Highlanders).

On the Staff of General Officer Commanding :—BREVET-MAJOR W. F. H. S. KINCAID (Royal Engineers), Assistant Adjutant-General; CAPTAIN F. I. MAXSE (Coldstream Guards); CAPTAIN THE HONOURABLE C. E. WALSH (Rifle Brigade); LIEUTENANT G. F. GORRINGE, D.S.O. (Royal Engineers). Medical Staff :—SURGEON-CAPTAINS H. E. H. SMITH and C. S. SPONG (Army Medical Staff).

The intervening distance of 132 miles over an exceptionally rough road and during excessive heat was accomplished in eight days and, after a night march of 18 miles, Abu Hamed was stormed at 6.30 A.M. on the 7th of August, the position being captured after an hour's house-to-house fighting, with the loss of two British officers and 21 men killed, and three Egyptian officers and 61 men wounded.

MAJOR-GENERAL HUNTER reported that the behaviour of everyone engaged was deserving of all praise.

The death of two gallant and capable officers, MAJOR SIDNEY and LIEUTENANT FITZCLARENCE (Dorsetshire Regiment), both of the Xth Soudanese Battalion, is a great loss to the army, and is deeply deplored by the whole force.

A small number only of the original Dervish garrison escaped, and, falling back on the reinforcements, which were some distance from Abu Hamed, the whole retired to Berber.

During this operation it was necessary to maintain a considerable garrison at Merowe, and a strong patrol of Camel Corps under BREVET-MAJOR R. J. TUDWAY (Essex Regiment) was despatched thence to Gakdul to hold in check the Dervish force at Metemma.

Simultaneously with the advance of the flying column, one unarmed and six armed sternwheelers, besides a quantity of sailing craft, were sent across the Fourth Cataract. I cannot

speak too highly of the zeal, energy, and skill displayed by COMMANDER KEPPEL, Royal Navy, assisted by LIEUTENANT THE HONOURABLE H. HOOD, Royal Navy, and LIEUTENANT D. BEATTY, D.S.O., Royal Navy, as well as by CAPTAIN H. G. FITTON, D.S.O. (Berkshire Regiment), CAPTAIN E. A. STANTON (Oxfordshire Light Infantry), and CAPTAIN E. G. T. BAINBRIDGE (East Kent Regiment), who were employed in connection with the steamers which (with the exception of the gunboat *El Teb* capsized in the cataracts) were all successfully brought to Abu Hamed by the 29th of August; whilst MAJOR F. J. PINK, D.S.O. (Royal West Surrey Regiment), CAPTAIN H. S. SLOMAN (East Surrey Regiment), CAPTAIN W. R. B. DORAN (Royal Irish Regiment), CAPTAIN J. J. ASSER (Dorsetshire Regiment), LIEUTENANT E. P. STRICKLAND (Norfolk Regiment), LIEUTENANT J. M. A. GRAHAM (East Lancashire Regiment), and various other officers and men were employed on the arduous and dangerous task of hauling the sailing craft through the rapids.

Meanwhile, reports having reached Merowe and Abu Hamed that the Dervishes were evacuating Berber, MAJOR-GENERAL HUNTER was ordered to push on with four gunboats to occupy that place; but, being somewhat delayed by one of the steamers striking a rock, which necessitated repairs, a party of irregular Arab scouts under AHMED BEY KHALIFA, who had been sent by land to verify the news, succeeded in entering Berber unopposed, followed on the 6th of September by the steamers, two of which were despatched south on the same day, and succeeded in capturing, off Ed Damer, the sailing craft of the retreating Dervish force.

The unexpected withdrawal of the enemy from Berber threw a great additional strain on the organisation and transport of supplies which had now to be carried from Kassingar, a distance of upwards of 270 miles, portage stations being established at the cataracts under CAPTAINS F. M. B. HOBBS (Royal Marines), J. A. E. MACBEAN (Royal Dublin Fusileers), and other officers; and the fact that the requirements of the Berber garrison were fully met reflects great credit on HONORARY MAJOR W. H. DRAGE, Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General (Army Service Corps), and on all the transport officers.

COMMANDER KEPPEL, Royal Navy, with the gunboat flotilla reconnoitred the enemy's position at Metemma on the 16th and 17th of September, and again on the 3rd of November, proceeding

on that date as far south as the foot of the Sixth Cataract. On both occasions the gunboats were heavily fired on by the Dervish forts, but sustained little damage. They captured several of the enemy's sailing craft.

In order to clear the districts round Berber of the presence of Dervish raiders from Osman Digna's camp on the Atbara, a small column was despatched on the 23rd of October, under the command of MAJOR-GENERAL HUNTER, composed of the XIth Soudanese Battalion (BREVET-MAJOR H. W. JACKSON, Gordon Highlanders, Commanding), two guns under CAPTAIN M. PEAKE (Royal Artillery), and detachments of Camel Corps and transport, but the enemy retired south before the arrival of the troops, and consequently, after reconnoitring the country towards Goz Regeb and burning Adarama on the 2nd of November, the column returned to Berber on the 9th of November. During this operation a post was established at the mouth of the Atbara under LIEUTENANT J. F. WOLSELEY (Cheshire Regiment).

The withdrawal of Osman Digna from this portion of the Eastern Soudan has thus enabled the tribes to rally to the Government, and the road between Suakin and Berber has been opened. An Egyptian garrison is also on its way to Kassala to take over that place from the Italians under agreement with the Egyptian Government.

The presence of a considerable force of Dervishes at Metemma necessitates the maintenance of a strong garrison at Merowe under the command of MAJOR-GENERAL H. M. L. RUNDLE, C.M.G., D.S.O. (Royal Artillery), to safeguard the Dongola district, but it is satisfactory to note that the tribes inhabiting the Bayuda Desert are, almost without exception, loyal to the Egyptian Government.

On the 31st of October the Desert Railway from Wady Halfa was opened to Abu Hamed, and the extension towards Berber was at once begun. The rapid completion of this line, which has greatly facilitated communications, reflects much credit on LIEUTENANT-COLONEL J. G. MAXWELL, D.S.O. (Commanding Nubia District), LIEUTENANT E. P. C. GIROUARD, D.S.O. (Royal Engineers), and his Staff, and on all officers and men employed on this undertaking, which has been successfully accomplished in almost record time, under great vicissitudes and during exceptionally hot weather.

In conclusion, it is my pleasant duty to record my appreciation of the excellent services of not only the officers and troops mentioned above, but also of the whole force of the Egyptian Army in the Soudan, who, whether British or Native, officers or men, willingly and ably carried out the often arduous duties they were called upon to perform, and maintained throughout the trying summer heat most excellent discipline and soldier-like spirit.

As fuller accounts have from time to time been submitted to you, dealing in detail with the various movements described, I have thought it merely necessary in the above despatch to touch on the salient points of the recent operations, which have resulted in retaking for Egypt upwards of 300 miles of the Nile Valley, besides the whole of the Eastern Soudan, and in freeing the inhabitants of these districts from terrible oppression.

I have, &c.,

HERBERT KITCHENER,

Major-General, Sirdar.

III. AFTER THE ATBARA

FROM THE DESPATCH OF LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR FRANCIS GRENFELL, COVERING THE DESPATCH OF MAJOR-GENERAL SIR HERBERT KITCHENER

(*Published in the 'London Gazette,' May 24th*, 1898)

Headquarters, Cairo: April 22nd, 1898.

SIR,—1. I have the honour to forward, for the information of the Secretary of State for War, the accompanying despatch from MAJOR-GENERAL SIR HERBERT KITCHENER, K.C.B., R.C.M.G., SIRDAR, describing the operations of the force under his command from the 16th of March to the 8th of April, including the expedition to Shendi, the cavalry reconnaissances of the 30th of March and the 4th of April, and the battle of the Atbara.

The result of those skilfully conducted operations has been the

entire destruction of Mahmud's army, which left Shendi on the 12th of March, 18,900 strong.

2. The attack on the Dervish position at Shendi, well conceived by the Sirdar, and ably carried out by BREVET-MAJOR HICKMAN, D.S.O., in command of the infantry, and COMMANDER KEPPEL, D.S.O., in charge of gunboats, resulted in the destruction of Mahmud's base, and the evacuation of that position by the Dervishes.

3. The cavalry reconnaissances of the 30th of March and the 4th of April were skilfully and ably carried out by MAJOR-GENERAL HUNTER, D.S.O. The gallant charge of the Egyptian cavalry is worthy of notice. . . .

8. It would be superfluous on my part to call attention to the services of SIR HERBERT KITCHENER; but having served with him for many years, I have had the opportunity of watching the development of those soldier-like qualities which have made him the skilful administrator and able General he now is.

9. I would specially call attention to the Sirdar's acknowledgment of the services of MAJOR-GENERAL HUNTER, D.S.O., and MAJOR-GENERAL GATACRE, C.B., D.S.O. MAJOR-GENERAL HUNTER again showed the ability and gallantry which have distinguished him during his long career in Egypt.

FROM THE DESPATCH OF MAJOR-GENERAL SIR HERBERT KITCHENER

(Published in the 'London Gazette,' May 24th, 1898)

On the 16th of March I concentrated at Kunur a force consisting of:—

The British Brigade, with six Maxim guns, under MAJOR-GENERAL GATACRE, to which a battery of Egyptian artillery was also attached.

A division of the Egyptian army, under MAJOR-GENERAL HUNTER, consisting of two brigades, each composed of four battalions, a battery of artillery and Maxim guns, under the respective commands of LIEUTENANT-COLONELS MAXWELL and MACDONALD.

Eight squadrons of Egyptian cavalry, under BREVET-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL BROADWOOD.

Three batteries of artillery, under LIEUTENANT-COLONEL LONG.

The Transport Corps, under BREVET-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL KITCHENER.

The 1st Battalion, under CAPTAIN DORAN, was left to hold the store depôt and hospital at Berber, and half of the 5th Battalion at Geneinetti, under CAPTAIN BAINBRIDGE, to watch the railway and lines of communication north.

The concentrated force advanced on the 20th of March to Hudi, on the Atbara, where it was joined by an Egyptian brigade under BREVET-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL LEWIS, and a battery of artillery from the Atbara Fort. . . .

On the following day our cavalry encountered at Abadar a force of Dervish horsemen advancing down stream. This contact took place on the thickly wooded river-bank, where the outposts of CAPTAIN THE HON. E. BARING'S squadron were driven in, and the squadron commanded by CAPTAIN PERSSE was ordered to clear the bush. This was done with great gallantry and in face of superior numbers of the enemy, who were steadily forced back for four miles. . . .

On the morning of the 26th of March the gunboats, under COMMANDER KEPPEL, assisted by LIEUTENANT BEATTY and LIEUTENANT THE HON. H. HOOD, arrived opposite the enemy's position, and landed the troops under the command of BREVET-MAJOR HICKMAN, with whom were MAJOR SITWELL, CAPTAIN SLOMAN, and LIEUTENANT GRAHAM. . . .

As Mahmud still made no offer to come out of his entrenched camp, I despatched on the 30th of March eight squadrons of cavalry, the Horse Battery under BREVET-MAJOR YOUNG, and four Maxims under BREVET-MAJOR LAWRIE and CAPTAIN PEAKE, supported at Abadar by two battalions of infantry, the whole under the command of GENERAL HUNTER, to reconnoitre his position. . . .

Our cavalry, supported by infantry, now kept in daily touch with the enemy, whose position was also reconnoitred from the left bank by MAJOR MAHON, CAPTAIN HAIG, and other officers.

On the 4th of April the force was moved five miles further on to Abadar, and from here I despatched, on the following day, another reconnaissance of the mounted troops, supported by

infantry, under GENERAL HUNTER as before, and accompanied by BREVET-MAJOR KINCAID, Assistant Adjutant-General, CAPTAIN SIR H. RAWLINSON, Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General, LIEUTENANT SMYTH, and other officers. . . .

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL BROADWOOD, with MAJOR LE GALLAIS'S and CAPTAIN PERSSE'S squadrons, gallantly charged the Dervish horsemen, getting well home, and forcing them to fall back. CAPTAIN PERSSE received a bullet-wound in the forearm. . . . CAPTAIN FITTON, Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General, directed the line of advance with the greatest accuracy. . . . Twelve guns came into action, assisted by a rocket detachment under LIEUTENANT BEATTY, Royal Navy. . . . CAPTAIN PEYTON'S squadron had been sent down to the river-bank on the extreme right previous to the general advance. . . . Mahmud was taken prisoner by the Xth Battalion under the command of MAJOR NASON. . . . I deeply regret the loss of CAPTAINS URQUHART and FINDLAY (Cameron Highlanders) and SECOND-LIEUTENANT GORE (Seaforth Highlanders), who fell, gallantly leading their men over the trenches. . . .

My special thanks are due to MAJOR-GENERAL HUNTER, who throughout the operations gave additional proof of those valuable and soldier-like qualities which I have frequently had the pleasure of bringing to the favourable notice of Her Majesty's Government. He was indefatigable alike in the preliminary reconnaissances and during the general engagement, in which he led his division over the trenches with great gallantry: to his care and foresight I attribute much of the success which has attended the campaign on the Atbara.

The high state of efficiency to which the British brigade was brought is, I consider, in a large measure due to the untiring energy and devotion to duty of MAJOR-GENERAL GATACRE and the loyal support rendered him by the commanding officers of battalions, all of whom he has brought to favourable notice. During the engagement on the 8th inst. GENERAL GATACRE showed a fine example of gallant leading. The cordiality and good-feeling existing between the British and Egyptian troops who have fought shoulder to shoulder is (*sic*) to a great extent due to the hearty co-operation of GENERAL GATACRE, and I cannot speak too highly of the services rendered by him and the troops under his command during the recent operations.

I fully confirm GENERAL HUNTER'S remarks on the valuable services of the three brigadiers commanding the infantry brigades, viz. LIEUTENANT-COLONEL MAXWELL, BREVET-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL LEWIS, and BREVET-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL MACDONALD. They handled their troops with precision, leading them gallantly in action, and they have shown themselves fully qualified as commanders of troops in the field.

The medical arrangements of the British brigade, under BRIGADE-SURGEON-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL MCNAMARA and his staff, and of the Egyptian army, under the direction of BRIGADE-SURGEON-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL GALLWEY and his staff, were under the somewhat difficult circumstances of the operations satisfactory, and the energy and skill displayed by the medical staff under their direction is (*sic*) deserving of much credit.

GENERAL GATACRE has also brought to my notice—and I fully indorse his remarks—the care, attention, and personal kindness received by the whole brigade from the REV. R. BRINDLE, Roman Catholic Chaplain; the REV. J. SIMMS, Presbyterian Chaplain; and the REV. A. W. WATSON, Church of England Chaplain, who have been indefatigable in their efforts to minister to the sick and wounded at all hours.

A very noticeable feature in the late operations was the efficiency and good organisation of the camel transport, reflecting great credit on LIEUTENANT-COLONEL KITCHENER, Director of Transport, and his staff.

The long line of communications, extending from Assuan south, was placed under the command of MAJOR-GENERAL RUNDLE, and it was due to the energy displayed by his staff and the officers commanding stations that the troops were kept amply supplied.

My thanks are due to BREVET-COLONEL WINGATE, and the Intelligence Staff under him, who kept me fully informed, as well as to the other members of my Staff, who performed their various duties to my entire satisfaction.

In addition to the services of those officers whose names I have specially mentioned in the body of the despatch, I would also bring to your notice the valuable services of the following Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and men:—

HEADQUARTERS STAFF

Major a'Court (temporarily attached).
Captain Watson, Aide-de-Camp.
Captain Blunt (Senior Officer, Supplies and Stores).
Lieutenant Gorringe (Senior Officer).
Lieutenant Lord E. Cecil, A.D.C.
Lieutenant Manifold (Senior Officer, Telegraphs).

BRITISH BRIGADE

Brigade Staff

Major Snow (Brigade Major).
Captain Brooke, Aide-de-Camp.
Captain Fair (Senior Officer).
Lieutenant Pigott (Senior Officer).

Artillery

Major Hunter Blair.
Lieutenant Owen.

Infantry

Warwickshire

Lieutenant-Colonel Jones (commanding).
Major Landon.
Lieutenant and Adjutant Earle.
Lieutenant Greer (wounded).

Lincolnshire

Colonel Verner (commanding, wounded).
Major Simpson.
Major Mainwaring.
Captain Forrest.
Lieutenant and Adjutant Marsh.
Lieutenant Boxer (wounded).
Lieutenant Tatchell.

Seaforth Highlanders

Colonel Murray (commanding, wounded).
Major Campbell.
Major Jameson.
Captain Egerton.
Captain Baillie (wounded).
Lieutenant Vandeleur (wounded).
Lieut. and Adjutant Ramsden.
Second Lieutenant Daniell.

Cameron Highlanders

Colonel Money (commanding).
Major Watson-Kennedy.
Major Napier (wounded).
Captain Honourable A. Murray.
Lieutenant and Adjutant Campbell.

Medical Staff

SURGEON-MAJOR BRADDELL.
SURGEON-MAJOR CARR.
SURGEON-MAJOR ADAMSON.
SURGEON-CAPTAIN MATHIAS.
SURGEON-LIEUTENANT BLISS.

Army Pay Department

HONORARY CAPTAIN SMITH.

Veterinary Department

VETERINARY-LIEUTENANT RUSSELL.

NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND MEN.

Seaforth Highlanders

COLOUR-SERGEANT M'IVER.
CORPORAL LAWRIE.

Cameron Highlanders

COLOUR-SERGEANT FISHER.
PRIVATE CROSS.
PRIVATE CHALMERS.

Army Service Corps

STAFF-SERGEANT WYETH.

EGYPTIAN ARMY

Cavalry

CAPTAIN HIS SERENE HIGHNESS PRINCE FRANCIS OF TECK.
LIEUTENANT THE MARQUIS OF TULLIBARDINE.

Artillery

CAPTAIN DE ROUGEMONT.

Camel Corps

CAPTAIN KING.

INFANTRY

Brigade Majors

MAJOR MAXSE.
BREVET-MAJOR KEITH-FALCONER.
CAPTAIN ASSER.

2nd Battalion

Major Pink (commanding).	Lieutenant Strickland.

3rd Battalion

Lieutenant-Colonel Sillem (commanding).	Captain Blewitt.

4th Battalion

Brevet-Major Sparkes (commanding).

IXth Battalion

Captain Walter (commanding, wounded).	Lieutenant Ravenscroft.

Xth Battalion

Brevet-Major Fergusson.	Captain MacBean.

XIth Battalion

Brevet-Major Jackson (commanding).	Captain Stanton.

XIIth Battalion

Brevet-Lieut.-Colonel Townshend (commanding).	Captain Honourable C. Walsh (wounded).
Captain Ford-Hutchinson.	Lieutenant Harley (wounded).

XIIIth Battalion

Brevet-Lieut.-Colonel Collinson.	Captain Godden.

XIVth Battalion

Brevet-Major Shekleton (commanding, wounded).	Captain Hamilton.
	Captain Matthews.

Medical Staff

Surgeon-Captain Penton.	Surgeon-Captain Spong.
Surgeon-Captain Hill Smith.	Surgeon-Captain Dunn.

Transport Corps

Captain Williams.	Second-Lieutenant McKey.
Second-Lieutenant Healy.	

NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS

Cavalry

SERGEANT-MAJOR BLAKE.

Infantry

LANCE-SERGEANT RUSSELL.
SERGEANT SCOTT-BARBOUR.
SERGEANT HILTON (wounded).
SERGEANT HANDLEY (wounded).
COLOUR-SERGEANT KELHAM.
COLOUR-SERGEANT SHEPPERD.

I have, &c.,
HERBERT KITCHENER, Sirdar.

IV. AFTER OMDURMAN

FROM THE DESPATCH OF LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR FRANCIS GRENFELL, COVERING THE DESPATCH OF MAJOR-GENERAL SIR HERBERT KITCHENER

(*Published in the 'London Gazette,' September 30th*, 1898)

6. While thoroughly endorsing the Sirdar's recommendations, I desire to call attention to the good work done by MAJOR-GENERAL HENDERSON, C.B., and Staff at Alexandria, who conducted the disembarkation of the force, and by my own Staff at Cairo.

On COLONEL H. COOPER, Assistant Adjutant-General, and LIEUTENANT-COLONEL L. A. HOPE, Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General, fell the brunt of the work in the despatch of the British Division to the front.

I also desire to acknowledge the services of BREVET-COLONEL A. O. GREEN, Commanding Royal Engineers; SURGEON-GENERAL H. S. MUIR, M.D., Principal Medical Officer; LIEUTENANT-COLONEL F. O. LEGGETT, Army Ordnance Department; COLONEL F. TREFFRY, Army Pay Department; VETERINARY-CAPTAIN BLENKINSOP, and the junior officers of the various departments.

MAJOR WILLIAMS, my C.R.A., was indefatigable in organising the mule transport for the 32nd and 37th Field Batteries.

7. I have received the greatest assistance from the Egyptian Railway Administration in the movements of the troops both going south and returning.

Thanks to the admirable system organised by ISKANDER BEY FAHMY, the Traffic Manager, all the services were rapidly and punctually carried out.

8. I am sending this Despatch home by my Aide-de-Camp, LIEUTENANT H. GRENFELL, 1st Life Guards, who acted as Orderly Officer to BRIGADIER-GENERAL HONOURABLE N. G. LYTTELTON, C.B., Commanding Second British Brigade in the Soudan.

I have, &c.,
FRANCIS GRENFELL,
Lieutenant-General, Commanding in Egypt.

FROM THE DESPATCH OF MAJOR-GENERAL SIR HERBERT KITCHENER, SIRDAR

(Published in the 'London Gazette,' September 30th, 1898)

It would be impossible for any commander to have been more ably seconded than I was by the General Officers serving under me. MAJOR-GENERALS HUNTER, RUNDLE, and GATACRE have displayed the highest qualities as daring and skilful leaders, as well as being endowed with administrative capabilities of a high order. It is in the hands of such officers that the Service may rest assured their best interests will, under all circumstances, be honourably upheld, and while expressing to them my sincere thanks for their cordial co-operation with me, I have every confidence in most highly recommending the names of these General Officers for the favourable consideration of Her Majesty's Government.

The manner in which the Brigadiers handled their respective brigades, the thorough knowledge of their profession, and their proved skill in the field, mark them out, one and all, as fitted for higher rank, and I have great pleasure in submitting their names for favourable consideration: BRIGADIER-GENERALS N. G. LYTTELTON and A. G. WAUCHOPE; LIEUTENANT-COLONELS J. G. MAXWELL, H. A. MACDONALD, D. F. LEWIS, and J. COLLINSON.

MACDONALD'S Brigade was highly tested, bearing the brunt of two severe attacks delivered at very short intervals from different directions, and I am sure it must be a source of the greatest satisfaction to COLONEL MACDONALD, as it is to myself and the whole Army, that the very great care he has for long devoted to

the training of his brigade has proved so effectual, enabling his men to behave with the greatest steadiness under most trying circumstances, and repelling most successfully two determined Dervish onslaughts.

I should also mention under this category the excellent services performed by COLONEL R. H. MARTIN, Commanding 21st Lancers; by LIEUTENANT-COLONEL LONG, Commanding the combined British and Egyptian Artillery; and by LIEUTENANT-COLONEL R. G. BROADWOOD, Commanding the Egyptian Cavalry; as well as by MAJOR R. J. TUDWAY, Commanding the Camel Corps. I consider that these various arms could not have been more efficiently commanded than they were throughout the recent operations. The best result was, I believe, attained, and it is due to the skilful handling of their respective commands that the Dervish defeat was so complete.

The Medical Department was administered with ability and skill by SURGEON-GENERAL TAYLOR, Principal Medical Officer, who was well assisted by COLONEL MCNAMARA, whilst the medical organisation of the Egyptian Army fully maintained its previous excellent reputation, under the direction of LIEUTENANT-COLONEL GALLWEY and his Staff. The general medical arrangements were all that could have been desired, and I believe the minimum of pain and maximum of comfort procurable on active service in this country was attained by the unremitting energy, untiring zeal, and devotion to their duty of the entire Medical Staff.

Owing to the long line of communications by rail, river, and desert, the work of maintaining a thoroughly efficient supply and transport system, both by land and water, was arduous in the extreme; and that a large British and Egyptian force was brought up to within striking distance of Khartoum, amply supplied with all its requirements, reflects the greatest credit on the supply and transport system. I wish to cordially thank the officers of the Supply, Transport, and Railway Departments for the satisfactory results which have attended their labours.

I consider that the excellent ration which was always provided kept the men strong and healthy, and fit to endure all the hardships of an arduous campaign, enabling them, at a critical moment, to support the exceptional fatigue of continuous marching and fighting for some fourteen hours during the height of a Soudan summer.

The Intelligence Department were, as usual, thoroughly efficient, and their forecasts of the intentions and actions of the enemy were accurate. COLONEL WINGATE and SLATIN PASHA worked indefatigably, and, with their Staff, deserve a prominent place amongst those to whom the success of the operations is due.

The excellent service performed by the gunboats under COMMANDER KEPPEL and his subordinate officers of the Royal Navy is deserving of special mention. These gunboats have been for a long time past almost constantly under fire: they have made bold reconnaissances past the enemy's forts and rifle-pits, and on the 1st and 2nd of September, in conjunction with the Irregular levies under MAJOR STUART WORTLEY and the Howitzer Battery, they materially aided in the capture of all the forts on both banks of the Nile, and in making the fortifications of Omdurman untenable. In bringing to notice the readiness of resource, daring, and ability of COMMANDER KEPPEL and his officers, I wish also to add my appreciation of the services rendered by ENGINEER E. BOND, Royal Navy, and the Engineering Staff, as well as of the detachments of the Royal Marine Artillery, and the gun crews, who have gained the hearty praise of their commanders.

The REVEREND R. BRINDLE, the REVEREND J. M. SIMMS, the REVEREND A. W. B. WATSON, and the REVEREND O. S. WATKINS won the esteem of all by their untiring devotion to their sacred duties, and by their unfailing and cheerful kindness to the sick and wounded at all times.

To all my Personal Staff my thanks are specially due for the great assistance they at all times rendered me.

In conclusion, I have great pleasure in expressing my appreciation of the services rendered by the detachments of the Royal Engineers, Army Ordnance Corps, and Telegraph and Postal Departments.

The names of the following Officers, Non-commissioned Officers, and men have been brought to my notice for good service:—

Staff

MAJOR HONOURABLE M. G. TALBOT, Royal Engineers.
MAJOR C. A'COURT, Rifle Brigade.
MAJOR W. F. H. S. KINCAID, Royal Engineers.
MAJOR B. R. MITFORD, East Surrey Regiment.
MAJOR L. G. DRUMMOND, Scots Guards.

Major T. D'O. Snow, Royal Inniskilling Fusileers.
Major A. E. Sandbach, Royal Engineers.
Major Maxse, Coldstream Guards.
Major Keith-Falconer, Northumberland Fusileers.
Major Lord Edward Cecil, Grenadier Guards.
Major Robb, half-pay.
Captain D. Henderson, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.
Captain Sir H. Rawlinson, Bart., Coldstream Guards.
Captain J. J. Asser, Dorsetshire Regiment.
Captain E. E. Bernard, Army Service Corps.
Captain O. H. Pedley, Connaught Rangers.
Captain J. G. Rennie, Black Watch.
Captain H. G. Fitton, Berkshire Regiment.
Captain J. K. Watson, King's Royal Rifles.
Captain R. Brooke, 7th Hussars.
Captain N. M. Smyth, 2nd Dragoon Guards (wounded).
Lieutenant G. F. Gorringe, Royal Engineers.
Lieutenant G. B. Macaulay, Royal Engineers.
Lieutenant H. Grenfell, 1st Life Guards.
Lieutenant H. L. Pritchard, Royal Engineers.
Lieutenant Honourable F. H. S. Roberts, King's Royal Rifles.
Lieutenant R. B. D. Blakeney, Royal Engineers.
Lieutenant H. A. Micklem, Royal Engineers (wounded).
Lieutenant G. E. Pigott, Army Service Corps.
Lieutenant C. M. A. Wood, Northumberland Fusileers.
Lieutenant E. C. Midwinter, Royal Engineers.
Lieutenant W. D. Ingle, Middlesex Regiment.
Divisional Staff-Sergeant Jack, Middlesex Regiment.
Colour-Sergeant H. Sheppard, Royal West Kent Regiment.
Sergeant F. A. Titterell, Army Service Corps.
4063 Private A. Cameron, Cameron Highlanders.

Cavalry

Major W. G. Crole Wyndham, 21st Lancers.
Major H. Finn, 21st Lancers.
Major P. W. J. Le Gallais, 8th Hussars.
Major B. T. Mahon, 8th Hussars.
Major J. Fowle, 21st Lancers.
Captain N. Legge, 20th Hussars.
Captain F. H. Eadon, 21st Lancers.
Captain Honourable E. Baring, 10th Hussars.
Captain D. Haig, 7th Hussars.
Captain His Serene Highness Prince Francis J. L. F. of Teck, 1st Dragoons.
Captain W. H. Persse, 2nd Dragoon Guards.
Captain P. A. Kenna, 21st Lancers.

Captain W. E. Peyton, 15th Hussars.
Lieutenant Honourable R. H. L. J. de Montmorency, 21st Lancers.
Lieutenant J. C. Brinton (wounded), 2nd Life Guards.
Lieutenant R. N. Smyth, 21st Lancers.
Lieutenant A. H. M. Taylor, 21st Lancers.
Lieutenant the Marquis of Tullibardine, Royal Horse Guards.
Lieutenant Honourable R. F. Molyneux (wounded), Royal Horse Guards.
Second Lieutenant C. S. Nesham (wounded), 21st Lancers.
Lieutenant and Adjutant A. M. Pirie (wounded), 21st Lancers.
Squadron Sergeant-Major Blake, 17th Lancers.
Corporal Swarbrick, 21st Lancers.
Private Ayton, 21st Lancers.
Private Brown (wounded), 21st Lancers.

Royal Artillery

Major F. B. Elmslie.
Major W. H. Williams.
Major N. E. Young.
Major C. E. Lawrie.
Captain J. W. G. Dawkins.
Captain M. Peake.
Captain C. H. de Rougemont (wounded).
Captain G. McK. Franks.
Lieutenant G. W. Nicholson.
Lieutenant C. G. Stewart.
Lieutenant E. G. Waymouth.
Sergeant Howard.
Corporal Kelly.

Maxim Battery

Captain C. O. Smeaton. | Lieutenant C. H. W. Owen.
Second Lieutenant G. F. Clayton.

Infantry

Colonel V. Hatton, Grenadier Guards.
Colonel R. H. Murray, Seaforth Highlanders.
Colonel G. L. C. Money, Cameron Highlanders.
Colonel F. Howard, Rifle Brigade.
Lieutenant-Colonel C. G. Collingwood, Lancashire Fusileers.
Lieutenant-Colonel C. V. F. Townshend, I.S.C.
Lieutenant-Colonel J. Sillem, Welsh Regiment.
Lieutenant-Colonel C. G. C. Money, Northumberland Fusileers.
Lieutenant-Colonel W. E. G. Forbes, Royal Warwickshire Regiment.
Lieutenant-Colonel F. R. Lowth, Lincolnshire Regiment.
Lieutenant-Colonel H. L. Smith-Dorrien, Derbyshire Regiment.
Major C. J. Blomfield, Lancashire Fusileers.
Major J. A. Campbell, Seaforth Highlanders.
Major F. Lloyd, Grenadier Guards.
Major T. F. A. Watson Kennedy, Cameron Highlanders.

Major L. B. Friend, Royal Engineers.
Major H. W. Jackson, Gordon Highlanders.
Major F. Hackett-Thompson, Cameron Highlanders.
Major G. Cockburn, Rifle Brigade.
Major Honourable C. Lambton, Northumberland Fusileers.
Major H. B. Mainwaring, Lincolnshire Regiment.
Major L. A. Arkwright, Royal Engineers.
Major H. P. Shekleton, South Lancashire Regiment.
Major T. E. Hickman, Worcestershire Regiment.
Major W. S. Sparkes, Welsh Regiment.
Major F. J. Pink, Royal West Surrey Regiment.
Major C. Fergusson, Grenadier Guards.
Major F. J. Nason, Scottish Rifles.
Major W. H. Sitwell, Northumberland Fusileers.
Major H. E. Irwin, Royal Warwickshire Regiment
Major C. R. Simpson, Lincolnshire Regiment.
Major W. F. Walter, Lancashire Fusileers.
Major H. I. W. Hamilton, Royal West Surrey Regiment.
Captain R. N. Gamble, Lincolnshire Regiment.
Captain H. S. Sloman, East Surrey Regiment.
Captain St. G. C. Henry, Northumberland Fusileers.
Captain A. A. Spottiswoode, Seaforth Highlanders.
Captain T. Capper, East Lancashire Regiment.
Captain A. Blewitt, King's Royal Rifles.
Captain J. S. Ewart, Cameron Highlanders.
Captain G. H. Ford Hutchinson, Connaught Rangers.
Captain V. G. R. Johnson, Lincolnshire Regiment.
Captain R. D. Whigham, Royal Warwickshire Regiment.
Captain Honourable W. Lambton, Coldstream Guards.
Captain A. J. King, Royal Lancaster Regiment.
Captain G. Caldecott, Royal Warwickshire Regiment (since died of wounds).
Captain O. C. Wolley-Dod, Lancashire Fusileers.
Captain J. R. O'Connell, Shropshire Light Infantry.
Captain Honourable A. D. Murray, Cameron Highlanders.
Captain F. A. MacFarlan, Cameron Highlanders.
Captain E. A. Stanton, Oxfordshire Light Infantry.
Captain H. G. Majendie, Rifle Brigade.
Captain E. S. Herbert, Royal Highlanders.
Captain G. E. Matthews, Royal Marines.
Captain L. F. Green Wilkinson, Rifle Brigade.
Captain N. C. Maclachlan, Seaforth Highlanders.
Captain and Adjutant G. L. S. Ray, Northumberland Fusileers.
Captain and Quartermaster J. S. Cameron, Lancashire Fusileers.
Captain F. M. B. Hobbs, Royal Marines.
Captain M. H. K. Pechell, King's Royal Rifles.

Captain J. A. MacBean, Royal Dublin Fusileers.
Captain C. H. M. Doughty, Royal Welsh Fusileers.
Captain and Adjutant G. H. Thesiger, Rifle Brigade.
Captain S. S. S. Clarke, Cameron Highlanders (wounded).
Captain E. G. T. Bainbridge, East Kent Regiment.
Captain and Adjutant J. R. M. Marsh, Lincolnshire Regiment.
Captain and Adjutant F. A. Earle, Royal Warwickshire Regiment.
Captain and Adjutant Campbell, Cameron Highlanders.
Lieutenant W. E. J. Bradshaw, York and Lancaster Regiment.
Lieutenant G. de H. Smith, I.S.C.
Lieutenant E. P. Strickland, Norfolk Regiment.
Lieutenant and Quartermaster C. J. Dixon, Royal Warwickshire Regiment.
Lieutenant J. F. Wolseley, Cheshire Regiment.
Lieutenant D. A. Friederichs, Royal Engineers.
Lieutenant J. M. A. Graham, Royal Lancaster Regiment.
Lieutenant E. B. North, Royal Fusileers.
Lieutenant and Adjutant C. J. Ramsden, Seaforth Highlanders.
Lieutenant C. F. S. Vandeleur, Scots Guards (wounded).
Lieutenant E. A. Plunkett, Lincolnshire Regiment.
Lieutenant H. C. B. Hopkinson, Seaforth Highlanders (wounded).
Lieutenant W. R. A. Smith, Grenadier Guards.
Lieutenant F. F. Ready, Royal Berkshire Regiment.
Lieutenant E. Cox, Seaforth Highlanders.
Lieutenant and Quartermaster G. W. Anderson, Seaforth Highlanders.
Lieutenant A. R. Hoskins, North Staffordshire Regiment.
Lieutenant N. J. G. Cameron, Cameron Highlanders.
Lieutenant and Adjutant E. F. O. Gascoigne, Grenadier Guards.
Lieutenant A. D. Nicholson, Cameron Highlanders (wounded).
Lieutenant C. E. Etches, Royal Warwickshire Regiment.
Lieutenant Honourable E. D. Loch, Grenadier Guards.
Lieutenant A. J. McNeill, Seaforth Highlanders.
Lieutenant Honourable H. Dawnay, Rifle Brigade.
Lieutenant W. C. Christie, Royal Warwickshire Regiment.
Lieutenant and Quartermaster A. P. Yeadon, Cameron Highlanders.
Lieutenant H. H. Wilson, Lancashire Fusileers.
Second Lieutenant J. W. Sandilands, Cameron Highlanders.

Maxims

Captain D. W. Churcher, Royal Irish Fusileers.
Colour-Sergeant H. Sheppard, Royal West Kent Regiment.
Colour-Sergeant Brockway, Grenadier Guards.
Sergeant Russel, Scots Guards.
Drill-Instructor-Sergeant Donald McLeod, Seaforth Highlanders.

Sergeant Handley, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry.
3187 Sergeant J. Scott Barbour, Gordon Highlanders.
Sergeant J. Phillips, Grenadier Guards.
Sergeant Murray, Seaforth Highlanders.
18965 Sergeant G. H. Rawlinson, Royal Engineers.
24909 Sapper F. Bird, Royal Engineers.
26203 Sapper H. Brown, Royal Engineers.
2833 Sergeant Girling, Royal Warwickshire Regiment.
3632 Lance-Corporal Marsden, Royal Warwickshire Regiment.
3352 Corporal Darnley, Royal Warwickshire Regiment.
Sergeant-Major W. Church, Lincolnshire Regiment.
2747 Sergeant G. Stevens, Lincolnshire Regiment.
2687 Sergeant J. Wogan, Lincolnshire Regiment.
831 Colour-Sergeant D. Mackie, Seaforth Highlanders.
2269 Colour-Sergeant R. Robertson, Seaforth Highlanders.
2184 Colour-Sergeant McEwen, Seaforth Highlanders.
2165 Sergeant-Major Donald McLeod, Cameron Highlanders.
1640 Colour-Sergeant F. Mackenzie, Cameron Highlanders.
1209 Colour-Sergeant A. Fisher, Cameron Highlanders.
4691 I.C.S. Sergeant F. Crooke, Royal Army Medical Corps.
5127 I.C.S. Sergeant G. A. Benson, Royal Army Medical Corps.
7788 Lance-Sergeant A. P. Mears, Royal Army Medical Corps.
10830 Private A. Davidson, Royal Army Medical Corps.
Company Sergeant-Major Bennett, Royal Engineers.
Second Corporal A. Jones, Royal Engineers.
Quartermaster-Sergeant Chamberlain, Grenadier Guards.
Sergeant-Master-Cook Brooke, Grenadier Guards.
Sergeant-Instructor Lewis, Grenadier Guards.
281 Colour-Sergeant T. Burdett, Northumberland Fusileers.
300 Sergeant-Drummer J. Cordeal, Northumberland Fusileers.
4564 Sergeant A. Bannerman, Northumberland Fusileers.
2184 Colour-Sergeant Evans, Lancashire Fusileers.
4837 Corporal Porter, Lancashire Fusileers.
Sergeant-Major E. Bull, Rifle Brigade.
Quartermaster-Sergeant J. Alldridge, Rifle Brigade.
Colour-Sergeant J. Nicholas, Rifle Brigade.
2302 Colour-Sergeant J. Teaque, Royal Irish Fusileers.
3188 Corporal Michael Mullin, Royal Irish Fusileers.

Supply, Transport, and Ordnance

Lieutenant-Colonel L. A. Hope, Army Service Corps.
Lieutenant-Colonel J. Rogers, Army Service Corps.
Lieutenant-Colonel F. W. Kitchener, West Yorkshire Regiment.
Major W. H. Drage, Army Service Corps.
Major H. G. Morgan, Army Service Corps.

CAPTAIN A. B. HAMILTON, King's Own Scottish Borderers.
CAPTAIN S. BIRD, Royal Fusileers.
CAPTAIN C. M. MATHEW, Army Ordnance Department.
CAPTAIN H. N. SARGENT, Army Service Corps.
CAPTAIN E. C. J. WILLIAMS, East Kent Regiment.
CAPTAIN C. E. G. BLUNT, Army Service Corps.
CAPTAIN M. COUTTS, Army Service Corps.
CAPTAIN F. J. L. HOWARD, Army Service Corps.
LIEUTENANT G. E. PIGOTT, Army Service Corps.
BIMBASHI J. H. B. BUTLER.
SECOND LIEUTENANT C. MCKEY, Middlesex Regiment.
SECOND LIEUTENANT S. K. FLINT, Royal Irish Rifles.
CONDUCTOR J. A. ROBERTSON, Army Ordnance Department.
846 ARMOURER-SERGEANT E. WOOLLAM, Army Ordnance Department.
11334 SHOEING-SMITH PETER SMITH (wounded), Army Service Corps.
5677 QUARTERMASTER-SERGEANT OSBURN, Army Service Corps.
9996 SECOND CORPORAL FAWLEY, Army Service Corps.
9715 PRIVATE DARLING, Army Service Corps.
7756 STAFF-SERGEANT BEVILLE, Army Service Corps.
4491 SERGEANT PARSONS, Army Service Corps.
10345 SERGEANT J. TOPLISS, Army Service Corps.

Royal Army Medical Corps

LIEUT.-COLONEL A. T. SLOGGETT (wounded).
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL G. A. HUGHES.
MAJOR C. A. WEBB.
MAJOR G. ROBINSON.
MAJOR G. F. A. SMYTHE.
MAJOR D. WARDROP.
MAJOR R. W. BARNES.
MAJOR E. M. WILSON.
MAJOR A. DODD.
MAJOR M. O'D. BRADDELL.
MAJOR C. R. KILKELLY.
MAJOR W. H. PINCHES.
MAJOR H. M. ADAMSON.
MAJOR D. M. O'CALLAGHAN.
MAJOR H. B. MATHIAS.
CAPTAIN A. Y. REILY.
CAPTAIN R. H. PENTON.
CAPTAIN H. E. HILL SMITH.
CAPTAIN C. S. SPONG.
CAPTAIN P. H. WHISTON.
CAPTAIN G. A. T. BRAY.
CAPTAIN J. W. JENNINGS.
CAPTAIN H. N. DUNN.
LIEUTENANT E. W. BLISS.
LIEUTENANT S. L. CUMMINS.
FIRST-CLASS STAFF-SERGT. HOIST.
SERGEANT SCRASE.

Army Veterinary Department

VETERINARY-CAPTAIN G. R. GRIFFITH.
VETERINARY-CAPTAIN L. J. BLENKINSOP.
VETERINARY-CAPTAIN F. B. DRAGE, Royal Horse Guards.
VETERINARY-LIEUTENANT T. E. W. LEWIS.
VETERINARY-LIEUT. W. D. SMITH.
VETERINARY-LIEUTENANT W. E. RUSSELL.
FARRIER-MAJOR ESCREET.

Gunboats

Lieutenant Honourable H. L. A. Hood, Royal Navy.
Lieutenant David Beatty, Royal Navy.
Lieut. Walter Cowan, Royal Navy.
Lieut. J. B. Sparks, Royal Navy.
Lieutenant H. F. G. Talbot, Royal Navy.
Lieutenant C. M. Staveley, Royal Navy.
Major W. S. Gordon, Royal Engineers.
Major Prince Christian Victor of Schleswig-Holstein, King's Royal Rifle Corps.
Lieutenant A. G. Stevenson, Royal Engineers.
Lieutenant E. O. A. Newcombe, Royal Engineers.
Mr. Poole, Engineer.

I have, &c.
HERBERT KITCHENER,
Major-General, Sirdar.

V. AFTER GEDAREF

Supplementary List of Recommendations from the Despatch of Major-General Lord Kitchener of Khartoum

(*Published in the 'London Gazette,' December 9th*, 1898)

I beg to bring to your notice the names of the following Officers who have distinguished themselves during the recent operations in the Soudan:—

Lieutenant-Colonel J. A. Clery, Royal Army Medical Corps.
Brevet-Lieutenant-Colonel C. S. B. Parsons, Royal Artillery.
Lieutenant-Colonel N. Leader, late Royal Army Medical Corps.
Major H. M. Lawson, Royal Engineers.
Major C. O. Hore, South Staffordshire Regiment.
Major G. D. Hunter, D.S.O., Royal Army Medical Corps.
Brevet-Major the Honourable A. D. Murray, Cameron Highlanders.
Captain St. G. C. Henry, Northumberland Fusileers.
Captain the Honourable E. Baring, 10th Hussars.
Captain H. Slessor, Royal Marine Artillery.
Captain F. G. Anley, Essex Regiment.
Captain T. W. Hale, Wiltshire Regiment, Ordnance Officer, Fourth Class.
Captain A. de S. McKerrell, Cameron Highlanders.
Captain O. H. Pedley, Connaught Rangers.

Captain F. A. MacFarlan, Cameron Highlanders.
Captain H. G. Majendie, Rifle Brigade.
Captain E. B. Wilkinson, Lincolnshire Regiment.
Captain C. C. Fleming, Royal Army Medical Corps.
Captain H. C. Smith, Royal Dublin Fusileers.
Captain A. G. Dwyer, East Surrey Regiment.
Captain A. G. Fraser, King's Own Scottish Borderers.
Captain E. G. T. Bainbridge, East Kent Regiment.
Captain the Honourable A. G. A. Hore-Ruthven, 3rd Battalion Highland Light Infantry.
Lieutenant F. Burges, Gloucestershire Regiment.
Lieutenant C. J. Clerk, 21st Lancers.
Lieutenant H. H. S. Morant, Durham Light Infantry.
Lieutenant G. C. M. Hall, Royal Engineers.
Lieutenant F. Hunnard, Army Service Corps.
Lieutenant R. L. Adlercron, Cameron Highlanders.

Non-Commissioned Officer

Sergeant A. Nicklin, North Staffordshire Regiment.

I have, &c.,
KITCHENER OF KHARTOUM,
Major-General,
Sirdar, Egyptian Army.

APPENDIX C

EXTRACTS FROM THE 'LONDON GAZETTE'

SHOWING

HONOURS AND PROMOTIONS

GIVEN FOR

THE DONGOLA EXPEDITION, 1896

ABU HAMED

THE NILE EXPEDITION, 1898

THE OPERATIONS NEAR GEDAREF

AND

THE ACTION OF ROSAIRES

FOR THE DONGOLA EXPEDITION, 1896

(From the 'London Gazette' of November 17th, 1896)

WAR OFFICE, NOVEMBER 17TH, 1896

With reference to the notice in the 'Gazette' of the 3rd instant, relative to the operations of the Dongola Expeditionary Force, the names of the following officers should be added to the list of those mentioned at the end of the Sirdar's despatch of the 30th of September, 1896, as officers whose services are deserving of special mention:—

SURGEON-CAPTAIN P. H. WHISTON, Army Medical Staff (employed with Egyptian Army).

CAPTAIN C. M. MATHEW, Durham Light Infantry, Army Ordnance Department.

LIEUTENANT G. F. GORRINGE, Royal Engineers (employed with Egyptian Army).

WAR OFFICE, NOVEMBER 17TH, 1896

The Queen has been graciously pleased to give orders for the following promotion in, and appointments to, the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, in recognition of the services of the undermentioned officers during the recent operations in the Soudan:—

To be an Ordinary Member of the Military Division of the Second Class, or Knights Commanders, of the said Most Honourable Order, viz.:—

K.C.B. MAJOR-GENERAL SIR HORATIO HERBERT KITCHENER, K.C.M.G., C.B., Royal Engineers (Sirdar of Egyptian Army).

To be Ordinary Members of the Military Division of the Third Class, or Companions, of the said Most Honourable Order, viz.:—

C.B. LIEUTENANT-COLONEL WILLIAM FRANCIS DUNDONALD COCHRANE (employed with Egyptian Army).

BRIGADE-SURGEON-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL THOMAS JOSEPH GALLWEY, Army Medical Staff (employed with Egyptian Army).

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL EDWARD LOCKE ELLIOT, D.S.O., Indian Staff Corps.
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL JOHN ROGERS, Army Service Corps (employed with Egyptian Army).
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL THOMAS CURRIE, the Prince of Wales's (North Staffordshire Regiment).
CAPTAIN THE HONOURABLE STANLEY CECIL JAMES COLVILLE, Royal Navy.

ADMIRALTY, NOVEMBER 17TH, 1896

Promotion

Commander the HONOURABLE STANLEY CECIL JAMES COLVILLE has been promoted to the rank of Captain in Her Majesty's Fleet for special services in Egypt. Dated October 31st, 1896.

WAR OFFICE, NOVEMBER 17TH, 1896

The Queen has also been graciously pleased to give orders for the following appointments to the Distinguished Service Order and promotions in the Army, in recognition of the services of the undermentioned officers during the recent operations in the Soudan. The promotions to bear date November 18th, 1896:—

To be Companions of the Distinguished Service Order, viz.:—

D.S.O.

MAJOR CYRIL GODFREY MARTYR, the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.
SURGEON-MAJOR GEORGE DOUGLAS HUNTER, Army Medical Staff (employed with Egyptian Army).
MAJOR ROBERT HENRY GAGE HEYGATE, the Border Regiment (employed with Egyptian Army).
SURGEON-CAPTAIN RICHARD HUGH PENTON, Army Medical Staff (employed with Egyptian Army).
CAPTAIN NORTON LEGGE, 20th Hussars.
CAPTAIN BRYAN THOMAS MAHON, 8th Hussars (employed with Egyptian Army).
CAPTAIN HILL GODFREY MORGAN, Army Service Corps.
VETERINARY-CAPTAIN GEORGE RICHARD GRIFFITH, Army Veterinary Department (employed with Egyptian Army).
LIEUTENANT DAVID BEATTY, Royal Navy.
CAPTAIN HUGH GREGORY FITTON, the Princess Charlotte of Wales's (Royal Berkshire Regiment) (employed with Egyptian Army).
CAPTAIN JAMES KIERO WATSON, the King's Royal Rifle Corps (employed with Egyptian Army).
LIEUTENANT GEORGE FREDERICK GORRINGE, Royal Engineers (employed with Egyptian Army).
LIEUTENANT EDOUARD PERCY CRANWILL GIROUARD, Royal Engineers employed with Egyptian Army).

To be an Honorary Companion of the Distinguished Service Order, viz. :—

MIRALAI (COLONEL) FATHY BEY, Egyptian Army.

To be Major-Generals for Distinguished Service in the Field :—

Promotion

MAJOR and BREVET-COLONEL ARCHIBALD HUNTER, D.S.O., from the King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment) (employed with Egyptian Army).

MAJOR and BREVET-COLONEL HENRY MACLEOD LESLIE RUNDLE, C.M.G., D.S.O., Royal Artillery (employed with Egyptian Army).

Staff :—COLONEL (BRIGADIER-GENERAL) CHARLES COMYN EGERTON, C.B., D.S.O., Commanding the Indian Contingent, Suakin, to be Aide-de-Camp to the Queen.

Half-Pay :—MAJOR GEORGE EVAN LLOYD, D.S.O., from the South Staffordshire Regiment (employed with Egyptian Army), to be Lieutenant-Colonel.

To be Lieutenant-Colonels :—

Brevet of Lieutenant-Colonel

MAJOR CHARLES SIM BREMRIDGE PARSONS, Royal Artillery (employed with Egyptian Army).

MAJOR EATON AYLMER TRAVERS, Indian Staff Corps, Deputy-Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster-General, Suakin.

CAPTAIN and BREVET-MAJOR FRANCIS REGINALD WINGATE, C.B., D.S.O., Royal Artillery (employed with Egyptian Army).

CAPTAIN and BREVET-MAJOR JOHN GRENFELL MAXWELL, D.S.O., the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders) (employed with Egyptian Army).

CAPTAIN and BREVET-MAJOR ERNEST FREDERIC DAVID, Royal Marine Light Infantry (employed with Egyptian Army).

MAJOR DAVID FRANCIS LEWIS, the Cheshire Regiment.

MAJOR HECTOR ARCHIBALD MACDONALD, D.S.O., the Royal Fusileers (City of London Regiment) (employed with Egyptian Army).

MAJOR FREDERICK WALTER KITCHENER, the Prince of Wales's Own (West Yorkshire Regiment).

MAJOR JOHN FRANCIS BURN-MURDOCH, 1st Dragoons.

MAJOR GEORGE WILLIAM HACKET PAIN, the Worcestershire Regiment (employed with Egyptian Army).

MAJOR JOHN COLLINSON, the Northamptonshire Regiment (employed with Egyptian Army).

CAPTAIN and BREVET-MAJOR CHARLES VERE FERRERS TOWNSHEND, C.B., Indian Staff Corps (employed with Egyptian Army).

MAJOR ERNEST DE BRATH, Indian Staff Corps, Brigade Major, Suakin.

To be Majors :—

Brevet of Major

CAPTAIN ROBERT JOHN TUDWAY, the Essex Regiment (employed with Egyptian Army).

CAPTAIN HUGH PENTLAND SHEKLETON, the Prince of Wales's Volunteers (South Lancashire Regiment), (employed with Egyptian Army).

CAPTAIN THOMAS EDGECOMB HICKMAN, D.S.O., the Worcestershire Regiment.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM SPOTTISWOODE SPARKES, the Welsh Regiment (employed with Egyptian Army).

CAPTAIN HENRY MARLOW SIDNEY, the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry (employed with Egyptian Army).

CAPTAIN WILLIAM FRANCIS HENRY STYLE KINCAID, Royal Engineers (employed with Egyptian Army).

CAPTAIN RALEIGH GILBERT EGERTON, Indian Staff Corps.

CAPTAIN NORMAN EDWARD YOUNG, Royal Artillery (employed with Egyptian Army).

CAPTAIN BERTRAM REVELEY MITFORD, the East Surrey Regiment.

CAPTAIN HERBERT WILLIAM JACKSON, the Gordon Highlanders (employed with Egyptian Army).

CAPTAIN WILLIAM STAVELEY GORDON, Royal Engineers (employed with Egyptian Army).

CAPTAIN HAMILTON BOWER, Indian Staff Corps, Deputy-Assistant Quartermaster-General (for Intelligence), Suakin.

CAPTAIN HENRY MARWOOD, the Prince of Wales's (North Staffordshire Regiment).

CAPTAIN CHARLES EDWARD LAWRIE, Royal Artillery (employed with Egyptian Army).

CAPTAIN ALEXANDER CADELL, Indian Staff Corps.

To have the honorary rank of Major :—

Honorary Rank

QUARTERMASTER and HONORARY CAPTAIN WILLIAM HENRY DRAGE, Army Service Corps (employed with the Egyptian Army).

Army Medical Staff

SURGEON-MAJOR ARTHUR THOMAS SLOGGETT to be Surgeon-Lieutenant-Colonel.

The East Lancashire Regiment

STAFF SERGEANT-MAJOR WILLIAM EDWARD BAILEY, from the Army Service Corps (employed with the Egyptian Army), to be Second Lieutenant, *vice* A. C. M. ALINGTON, promoted.

The Royal Irish Rifles

COLOUR-SERGEANT SAMUEL KIRK FLINT, from the Dorsetshire Regiment (employed with the Egyptian Army), to be Second Lieutenant, *vice* C. R. SPEDDING, promoted.

FOR ABU HAMED, 1897

(*From the 'London Gazette' of March 11th*, 1898)

WAR OFFICE, MARCH 11TH, 1898

The Queen has been pleased to give orders for the following appointments to the Distinguished Service Order, and promotions in the Army, in recognition of the services of the undermentioned Officers while attached to the Egyptian Army during the recent operations in the Soudan, resulting in the capture of Abu Hamed and the subsequent occupation of Berber:—

To be Companions of the Distinguished Service Order, viz.:—

D.S.O. COMMANDER COLIN RICHARD KEPPEL, Royal Navy.
QUARTERMASTER and HONORARY MAJOR WILLIAM HENRY DRAGE, Army Service Corps.

To be Majors. Dated December 17th, 1897.

Brevet CAPTAIN VESEY THOMAS BUNBURY, the Leicestershire Regiment.
CAPTAIN CECIL EDWARD KEITH-FALCONER, the Northumberland Fusileers.
CAPTAIN CHARLES FERGUSSON, Grenadier Guards.

A.D.C. CAPTAIN and BREVET-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL FRANCIS REGINALD WINGATE, C.B., D.S.O., Royal Artillery, to be (extra) Aide-de-Camp to the Queen, with the rank of Brevet-Colonel. Dated 17th December, 1897.

FOR THE NILE EXPEDITION, 1898

WAR OFFICE, NOVEMBER 15TH, 1898

The Queen has been graciously pleased to signify her intention to confer the decoration of the Victoria Cross on the undermentioned officers and private soldier, whose claims have been submitted for her Majesty's approval, for their conspicuous bravery during the recent operations in the Soudan, as recorded against their names:—

V.C. CAPTAIN PAUL ALOYSIUS KENNA, 21st Lancers.—At the battle of Khartoum on the 2nd of September, 1898, Captain P. A. Kenna assisted Major Crole Wyndham, of the same regiment, by taking him on his horse, behind the saddle (Major Wyndham's horse having been killed in the charge), thus enabling him to reach a place of safety; and, after the charge of the 21st Lancers, Captain Kenna returned to assist Lieutenant de Montmorency, who was endeavouring to recover the body of Second Lieutenant R. G. Grenfell.

LIEUTENANT THE HONOURABLE RAYMOND HARVEY LODGE JOSEPH DE MONTMORENCY, 21st Lancers.—At the battle of Khartoum on the 2nd of September, 1898, Lieutenant de Montmorency, after the charge of the 21st Lancers, returned to assist Second Lieutenant R. G. Grenfell, who was lying surrounded by a large body of Dervishes. Lieutenant de Montmorency drove the Dervishes off, and, finding Lieutenant Grenfell dead, put the body on his horse, which then broke away. Captain Kenna and Corporal Swarbrick then came to his assistance, and enabled him to rejoin the regiment, which had begun to open a heavy fire on the enemy.

PRIVATE THOMAS BYRNE, 21st Lancers.—At the battle of Khartoum on the 2nd of September, 1898, Private Byrne turned back in the middle of the charge of the 21st Lancers and went to the assistance of Lieutenant the Honourable R. F. Molyneux, Royal Horse Guards, who was wounded, dismounted, disarmed, and being attacked by several Dervishes. Private Byrne, already severely wounded, attacked these Dervishes, received a second severe wound, and, by his gallant conduct, enabled Lieutenant Molyneux to escape.

CAPTAIN NEVILL MASKELYNE SMYTH, 2nd Dragoon Guards.—At the battle of Khartoum on the 2nd of September, 1898, Captain Smyth galloped forward and attacked an Arab who had run amok among some camp-followers. Captain Smyth received the Arab's charge and killed him, being wounded with a spear in the arm in so doing. He thus saved the life of one at least of the camp-followers.

WAR OFFICE, NOVEMBER 15TH, 1898

The Queen has been graciously pleased to give orders for the following promotions in and appointments to the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, in recognition of services in Egypt and the Soudan, including the battles of Atbara and Khartoum :—

To be Ordinary Members of the Military Division of the First Class, or Knights Grand Cross, of the said Most Honourable Order, viz. :—

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR FRANCIS WALLACE GRENFELL, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., Commanding the Force in Egypt. **G.C.B.**

MAJOR-GENERAL HORATIO HERBERT LORD KITCHENER, K.C.B., K.C.M.G., Royal Engineers, Sirdar of the Egyptian Army.

To be Ordinary Members of the Military Division of the Second Class, or Knights Commanders, of the said Most Honourable Order, viz.:—

K.C.B.

MAJOR-GENERAL WILLIAM FORBES GATACRE, C.B., D.S.O.

MAJOR-GENERAL ARCHIBALD HUNTER, D.S.O., Governor of Dongola Province and Commandant Frontier Field Force, Egypt.

MAJOR-GENERAL HENRY MACLEOD LESLIE RUNDLE, C.M.G., D.S.O., Royal Artillery, employed with Egyptian Army.

To be Ordinary Members of the Military Division of the Third Class, or Companions, of the said Most Honourable Order, viz.:—

C.B.

SURGEON-GENERAL WILLIAM TAYLOR, M.D., Army Medical Staff.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL and COLONEL VILLIERS HATTON, Grenadier Guards.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL and BREVET-COLONEL GORDON LORN CAMPBELL MONEY, D.S.O., A.D.C., the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders.

COLONEL THOMAS EDWARD VERNER, Regimental District.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL and BREVET-COLONEL ROWLAND HILL MARTIN, half-pay.

COLONEL WILLIAM HENRY MCNAMARA, M.D., Royal Army Medical Corps.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL LEWIS ANSTRUTHER HOPE, Army Service Corps, Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General, Egypt.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL CUTHBERT GEORGE COLLINGWOOD, half-pay.

MAJOR and BREVET-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL DAVID FRANCIS LEWIS, the Cheshire Regiment, employed with Egyptian Army.

MAJOR and BREVET-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL JOHN COLLINSON, the Northamptonshire Regiment, employed with Egyptian Army.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL CHARLES GILBERT COLVIN MONEY, the Northumberland Fusileers.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL WILLOUGHBY EDWARD GORDON FORBES, the Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL MOREY QUAYLE JONES, the Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL FRANK ROBERT LOWTH, the Lincolnshire Regiment.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL WALTER GEORGE CROLE WYNDHAM, 21st Lancers.

COMMANDER COLIN RICHARD KEPPEL, D.S.O., Royal Navy.

CHANCERY OF THE ORDER OF SAINT MICHAEL AND SAINT GEORGE

DOWNING STREET, NOVEMBER 11TH, 1898

The Queen has been graciously pleased to give directions for the following appointments to the Most Distinguished Order of

Saint Michael and Saint George, in recognition of their services in the Soudan :—

To be an Ordinary Member of the Second Class, or Knights Commanders, of the said Most Distinguished Order :—

BREVET-COLONEL FRANCIS REGINALD WINGATE, R.A., C.B., D.S.O., A.D.C. **K.C.M.G.**

To be an Honorary Member of the Second Class, or Knights Commanders, of the said Most Distinguished Order :—

COLONEL RUDOLF SLATIN PASHA, C.B., of the Egyptian Army.

WAR OFFICE, NOVEMBER 15TH, 1898

The Queen has also been graciously pleased to give orders for the following appointments to the Distinguished Service Order and promotions in the Army, in recognition of the services of the undermentioned officers in Egypt and the Soudan, including the battles of Atbara and Khartoum :—

The promotions to bear date November 16th, 1898.

To be Companions of the Distinguished Service Order :—

REVEREND ROBERT BRINDLE, Chaplain to the Forces, First Class. **D.S.O.**

CAPTAIN and BREVET-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL CHARLES VERE FERRERS TOWNSHEND, C.B., Indian Staff Corps, employed with Egyptian Army.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL GEORGE ARTHUR HUGHES, M.B., Royal Army Medical Corps.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL CHARLES JAMES BLOMFIELD, the Lancashire Fusileers.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL FRANCIS LLOYD, Grenadier Guards.

MAJOR EDWARD JAMES MONTAGU-STUART-WORTLEY, C.M.G., the King's Royal Rifle Corps.

MAJOR EDMOND MUNKHOUSE WILSON, C.M.G., Royal Army Medical Corps.

MAJOR GEORGE COCKBURN, the Rifle Brigade (The Prince Consort's Own).

MAJOR HONOURABLE CHARLES LAMBTON, the Northumberland Fusileers.

CAPTAIN and BREVET-MAJOR NORMAN EDWARD YOUNG, Royal Artillery.

CAPTAIN and BREVET-MAJOR CHARLES EDWARD LAWRIE, Royal Artillery.

MAJOR FREDERICK IVOR MAXSE, Coldstream Guards, employed with Egyptian Army.

CAPTAIN and BREVET-MAJOR VESEY THOMAS BUNBURY, the Leicestershire Regiment, employed with Egyptian Army.

CAPTAIN and BREVET-MAJOR CHARLES FERGUSSON, Grenadier Guards, employed with Egyptian Army.

CAPTAIN and BREVET-MAJOR LORD EDWARD HERBERT CECIL, Grenadier Guards.

MAJOR HUBERT ION WETHERALL HAMILTON, the Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment), employed with Egyptian Army.
MAJOR HUGH BRODERICK MATHIAS, Royal Army Medical Corps.
CAPTAIN CHARLES STUART SPONG, Royal Army Medical Corps, employed with Egyptian Army.
CAPTAIN HENRY TUFTON GODDEN, the Bedfordshire Regiment, employed with Egyptian Army.
CAPTAIN GEORGE HIGGINSON FORD-HUTCHINSON, the Connaught Rangers, employed with Egyptian Army.
ENGINEER EDMUND EDWARD BOND, Royal Navy.
LIEUTENANT WALTER HENRY COWAN, Royal Navy.
VETERINARY-CAPTAIN LAYTON JOHN BLENKINSOP, Army Veterinary Department.
CAPTAIN CHARLES MASSY MATHEW, the Durham Light Infantry, Ordnance Officer, Fourth Class.
CAPTAIN HIS SERENE HIGHNESS PRINCE FRANCIS JOSEPH LEOPOLD FREDERICK OF TECK, 1st Dragoons.
CAPTAIN WILLIAM ELIOT PEYTON, 15th Hussars, employed with Egyptian Army.
CAPTAIN JOHN ALBERT EMMANUEL MACBEAN, the Royal Dublin Fusileers, employed with Egyptian Army.
CAPTAIN RONALD GEORGE BROOKE, 7th Hussars.
LIEUTENANT ARTHUR MURRAY PIRIE, 21st Lancers, employed with Egyptian Army.
LIEUTENANT JOHN GEORGE, MARQUIS OF TULLIBARDINE, Royal Horse Guards.
LIEUTENANT ALEXANDER GAVIN STEVENSON, Royal Engineers, employed with Egyptian Army.
LIEUTENANT HARRY LIONEL PRITCHARD, Royal Engineers, employed with Egyptian Army.
LIEUTENANT ROBERT BYRON DRURY BLAKENEY, Royal Engineers, employed with Egyptian Army.
LIEUTENANT HENRY ANDREW MICKLEM, Royal Engineers, employed with Egyptian Army.
LIEUTENANT GRENVILLE EDMUND PIGOTT, Army Service Corps.
LIEUTENANT EDWARD COLPOYS MIDWINTER, Royal Engineers.
LIEUTENANT ERNEST FREDERICK ORBY GASCOIGNE, Grenadier Guards.
LIEUTENANT HONOURABLE EDWARD DOUGLAS LOCH, Grenadier Guards.

Promotion to rank of Major-General

To be Major-Generals (Supernumerary) for distinguished service in the field :—

COLONEL THE HONOURABLE N. G. LYTTELTON, C.B., Assistant Military Secretary, Headquarters of Army.
COLONEL A. G. WAUCHOPE, C.B., C.M.G., half-pay.

To be (extra) Aides-de-Camp to the Queen :—

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL and COLONEL R. H. MURRAY, C.B., Seaforth Highlanders (Ross-shire Buffs, the Duke of Albany's). **A.D.C.**

COLONEL H. COOPER, Assistant Adjutant-General, Egypt.

To be (extra) Aide-de-Camp to the Queen, with the rank of brevet-colonel :—

MAJOR and BREVET-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL H. A. MACDONALD, C.B., D.S.O. the Royal Fusileers (City of London Regiment), Brigadier-General Egyptian Army.

BREVET

To be Colonels :—

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL J. ROGERS, C.B., Army Service Corps, employed with Egyptian Army. **Brevet of Colonel**

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL C. J. LONG, employed with Egyptian Army.

MAJOR and BREVET-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL J. G. MAXWELL, D.S.O., Brigadier-General Egyptian Army.

MAJOR and BREVET-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL F. W. KITCHENER, the Prince of Wales's Own (West Yorkshire Regiment), employed with Egyptian Army.

MAJOR and BREVET-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL J. SILLEM, the Welsh Regiment, employed with Egyptian Army.

MAJOR and BREVET-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL R. G. BROADWOOD, 12th Lancers, employed with Egyptian Army.

MAJOR and BREVET-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL H. L. SMITH-DORRIEN, D.S.O., the Sherwood Foresters (Derbyshire Regiment).

To be Lieutenant-Colonels :—

MAJOR THE HONOURABLE M. G. TALBOT, Royal Engineers, employed with Egyptian Army. **Brevet of Lieutenant-Colonel**

MAJOR J. A. CAMPBELL, Seaforth Highlanders (Ross-shire Buffs, the Duke of Albany's).

MAJOR F. B. ELMSLIE, Royal Artillery.

MAJOR T. F. A. WATSON-KENNEDY, the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders.

MAJOR C. R. SIMPSON, the Lincolnshire Regiment.

MAJOR W. H. WILLIAMS, Royal Artillery.

MAJOR H. FINN, 21st Lancers.

MAJOR C. A'COURT, the Rifle Brigade (the Prince Consort's Own).

CAPTAIN and BREVET-MAJOR R. J. TUDWAY, the Essex Regiment, employed with Egyptian Army.

MAJOR H. P. SHEKLETON, the Prince of Wales's Volunteers (South Lancashire Regiment), employed with Egyptian Army.

CAPTAIN and BREVET-MAJOR T. E. HICKMAN, D.S.O., the Worcestershire Regiment, employed with Egyptian Army.

Captain and Brevet-Major W. S. Sparkes, the Welsh Regiment, employed with Egyptian Army.

Captain and Brevet-Major B. R. Mitford, the East Surrey Regiment, employed with Egyptian Army.

Captain and Brevet-Major H. W. Jackson, the Gordon Highlanders, employed with Egyptian Army.

Captain and Brevet-Major W. S. Gordon, Royal Engineers, employed with Egyptian Army.

Major F. J. Pink, D.S.O., the Queen's (Royal West Surrey Regiment), employed with Egyptian Army.

Major P. W. J. Le Gallais, 8th Hussars, employed with Egyptian Army.

Major T. D. O'Snow, the Royal Inniskilling Fusileers.

Major A. E. Sandbach, Royal Engineers, employed with Egyptian Army.

Captain and Brevet-Major C. E. Keith-Falconer, the Northumberland Fusileers.

Major F. J. Nason, the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), employed with Egyptian Army.

Major W. H. Sitwell, the Northumberland Fusileers, employed with Egyptian Army.

Major W. C. Hunter-Blair, Royal Artillery.

Major G. G. A. Egerton, Seaforth Highlanders (Ross-shire Buffs, the Duke of Albany's).

Major F. S. Robb, Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General, Headquarters of the Army.

Major J. S. Ewart, the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders.

To be Majors:—

Brevet of Major

Captain W. R. B. Doran, the Royal Irish Regiment, employed with Egyptian Army.

Captain F. H. Eadon, 21st Lancers.

Captain A. B. Hamilton, the King's Own Scottish Borderers, Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General, Alexandria.

Captain D. Henderson, Princess Louise's (Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders), Staff Captain at Headquarters.

Captain D. Haig, 7th Hussars.

Captain T. Capper, the East Lancashire Regiment, employed with Egyptian Army.

Captain A. Blewitt, the King's Royal Rifle Corps, employed with Egyptian Army.

Captain H. N. Sargent, Army Service Corps.

Captain (temporary Major) W. F. Walter, the Lancashire Fusileers, employed with Egyptian Army.

Captain A. J. King, the King's Own (Royal Lancaster Regiment).

Captain E. E. Bernard, Army Service Corps.

CAPTAIN E. C. J. WILLIAMS, the Buffs (East Kent Regiment), employed with Egyptian Army.
CAPTAIN HONOURABLE A. D. MURRAY, the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders.
CAPTAIN J. J. ASSER, the Dorsetshire Regiment, employed with Egyptian Army.
CAPTAIN H. G. FITTON, D.S.O., Princess Charlotte of Wales's (Royal Berkshire Regiment), employed with Egyptian Army.
CAPTAIN H. G. K. MATCHETT, the Connaught Rangers, employed with Egyptian Army.
CAPTAIN J. K. WATSON, D.S.O., the King's Royal Rifle Corps, employed with Egyptian Army.
CAPTAIN E. A. STANTON, the Oxfordshire Light Infantry, employed with Egyptian Army.
CAPTAIN HONOURABLE C. E. WALSH, the Rifle Brigade (the Prince Consort's Own).
CAPTAIN G. E. MATTHEWS, Royal Marine Light Infantry, employed with Egyptian Army.
CAPTAIN W. H. PERSSE, 2nd Dragoon Guards, employed with Egyptian Army.
CAPTAIN C. H. DE ROUGEMONT, Royal Artillery.
CAPTAIN G. L. S. RAY, the Northumberland Fusileers.
CAPTAIN D. W. CHURCHER, Princess Victoria's (Royal Irish Fusileers).
CAPTAIN C. E. G. BLUNT, Army Service Corps, employed with Egyptian Army.
CAPTAIN G. H. THESIGER, the Rifle Brigade (the Prince Consort's Own).
CAPTAIN J. R. MARSH, the Lincolnshire Regiment.
CAPTAIN F. A. EARLE, the Royal Warwickshire Regiment.
CAPTAIN J. CAMPBELL, the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders.

Royal Army Medical Corps

Promotions in R.A.M.C.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL T. J. GALLWEY, M.D., C.B., Principal Medical Officer, Egyptian Army, to be Colonel.
MAJOR G. W. ROBINSON to be Lieutenant-Colonel.
CAPTAIN R. H. PENTON, D.S.O., employed with Egyptian Army, to be Major.
CAPTAIN H. E. H. SMITH, employed with Egyptian Army, to be Major.
LIEUTENANT E. W. BLISS to be Captain.

Army Chaplains' Department

Promotion in A.C.D.

REVEREND J. M. SIMMS, Chaplain to the Forces Third Class, to be Chaplain to the Forces Second Class.

Army Veterinary Department

Promotion in A.V.D.

VETERINARY-LIEUTENANT T. E. W. LEWIS, employed with Egyptian Army, to be Veterinary-Captain.

MEMORANDA

Honorary rank of Lieutenant-Colonel

The undermentioned officer is granted the honorary rank of Lieutenant-Colonel:—

QUARTERMASTER and HONORARY MAJOR W. H. DRAGE, D.S.O., Army Service Corps, employed with Egyptian Army.

Of Major

The undermentioned officer is granted the honorary rank of Major:—

QUARTERMASTER and HONORARY CAPTAIN J. S. CAMERON, the Lancashire Fusileers.

Of Captain

The undermentioned officers are granted the honorary rank of Captain:—

QUARTERMASTER and HONORARY LIEUTENANT C. J. DIXON, Royal Warwickshire Regiment.

QUARTERMASTER and HONORARY LIEUTENANT G. W. ANDERSON, Seaforth Highlanders (Ross-shire Buffs, the Duke of Albany's).

QUARTERMASTER and HONORARY LIEUTENANT A. P. YEADON, the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders.

Distinguished Conduct Medal

The Queen has further been pleased to approve the grant of the Medal for Distinguished Conduct in the Field to the undermentioned:—

17th Lancers

SQUADRON SERGEANT-MAJOR BLAKE.

21st Lancers

SERGEANT W. CHALMERS.
CORPORAL F. W. SWARBRICK.
LANCE-CORPORAL H. D. PENN.
PRIVATE B. H. AYTON.
PRIVATE F. PEDDER.
PRIVATE W. BROWN.
PRIVATE W. BUSHELL.

Royal Artillery

SERGEANT HOWARD.
CORPORAL KELLY.

Royal Engineers

COMPANY SERGEANT-MAJOR BENNETT.
SERGEANT G. H. RAWLINSON.
SECOND CORPORAL A. JONES.
SAPPER F. BIRD.
SAPPER H. BROWN.

Grenadier Guards

COLOUR-SERGEANT BROCKWAY.
QUARTERMASTER-SERGEANT CHAMBERLAIN.
SERGEANT-MASTER COOK BROOKE.
SERGEANT-INSTRUCTOR LEWIS.
SERGEANT J. PHILLIPS.

Scots Guards

SERGEANT RUSSEL, employed with Egyptian Army.
SERGEANT C. HILTON, employed with Egyptian Army.

The Northumberland Fusileers

COLOUR-SERGEANT T. BURDETT.
SERGEANT-DRUMMER J. CORDEAL.
SERGEANT A. BANNERMAN (since deceased).

The Royal Warwickshire Regiment

SERGEANT GIRLING.
CORPORAL DARNLEY.
LANCE-CORPORAL MARSDEN.

The Lincolnshire Regiment

SERGEANT-MAJOR W. CHURCH.
SERGEANT G. STEVENS.
SERGEANT J. WOGAN.

The Lancashire Fusileers

COLOUR-SERGEANT EVANS.
CORPORAL PORTER.

The Queen's Own (Royal West Kent Regiment)

COLOUR-SERGEANT H. SHEPPARD.

The King's Own (Yorkshire Light Infantry)

SERGEANT E. A. T. HANDLEY.

The Duke of Cambridge's Own Middlesex Regiment

DIVISIONAL STAFF-SERGEANT JACK.

Seaforth Highlanders (Ross-shire Buffs, the Duke of Albany's)

COLOUR-SERGEANT D. MACKIE.
COLOUR-SERGEANT R. ROBERTSON.
COLOUR-SERGEANT MCEWEN.
COLOUR-SERGEANT MCIVER.
DRILL INSTRUCTOR-SERGEANT D. MCLEOD.
SERGEANT MURRAY.
CORPORAL LAURIE.

The Gordon Highlanders

SERGEANT J. SCOTT-BARBOUR, employed with Egyptian Army.

The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders

SERGEANT-MAJOR D. MCLEOD.
COLOUR-SERGEANT A. FISHER.
COLOUR-SERGEANT F. MACKENZIE.
PRIVATE A. CAMERON.
PRIVATE CROSS.
PRIVATE CHALMERS.

Princess Victoria's (Royal Irish Fusileers)

COLOUR-SERGEANT J. TEAQUE.
CORPORAL MICHAEL MULLIN.

The Rifle Brigade (The Prince Consort's Own)

SERGEANT-MAJOR E. BULL.
COLOUR-SERGEANT J. NICHOLAS.
QUARTERMASTER-SERGEANT J. ALLDRIDGE.

Army Service Corps

STAFF-SERGEANT BEVILLE.
STAFF-SERGEANT WYETH (since deceased).
SERGEANT PARSONS.
SERGEANT J. TOPLISS.
SERGEANT F. A. TITTERELL.
QUARTERMASTER-SERGEANT OSBURN.
SHOEING-SMITH P. SMITH.
SECOND CORPORAL PAWLEY.
PRIVATE DARLING.

Royal Army Medical Corps

FIRST-CLASS STAFF-SERGT. HOIST.
SERGEANT F. CROOKE.
SERGEANT G. A. BENSON.
SERGEANT SCRASE.
LANCE-SERGEANT A. P. MEARS.
PRIVATE A. DAVIDSON.

Army Ordnance Department

CONDUCTOR T. A. ROBERTSON.
ARMOURER-SERGEANT E. WOOLLAM.

Army Veterinary Department

FARRIER-MAJOR ESCREET.

Egyptian Infantry

COLOUR-SERGEANT KELHAM.

WAR OFFICE, NOVEMBER 15TH, 1898

ADDITIONAL NOTICE

Noted for consideration.

The undermentioned officers are noted for consideration as follows:—

'Good Service Reward.'

For a Good Service Reward when an opportunity offers:—

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL and BREVET-COLONEL F. HOWARD, C.B., A.D.C., the Rifle Brigade (the Prince Consort's Own).

Brevet of Lieutenant-Colonel on Promotion to Major.

For the Brevet rank of Lieutenant-Colonel on promotion to the rank of Major:—

CAPTAIN SIR H. S. RAWLINSON, BART., Coldstream Guards.

For the Brevet rank of Major, on promotion to the rank of Captain:—

LIEUTENANT E. P. STRICKLAND, the Norfolk Regiment, employed with Egyptian Army.

Brevet of Major on Promotion to Captain

LIEUTENANT G. B. MACAULAY, Royal Engineers, employed with Egyptian Army.
LIEUTENANT C. J. RAMSDEN, Seaforth Highlanders (Ross-shire Buffs, the Duke of Albany's).
LIEUTENANT H. M. GRENFELL, 1st Life Guards.

For extra-regimental promotion to the rank of Captain as opportunities offer:—

Extra-Regimental Promotion

LIEUTENANT J. F. WOLSELEY, the Cheshire Regiment, employed with Egyptian Army.
LIEUTENANT N. T. BORTON, the Welsh Regiment, employed with Egyptian Army.
LIEUTENANT T. H. HEALEY, the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, employed with Egyptian Army.

For promotion to the rank of Chaplain to the Forces Second Class, on promotion to the rank of Chaplain to the Forces Third Class:—

THE REVEREND A. W. B. WATSON, Chaplain to the Forces Fourth Class.

The undermentioned officers are granted the next higher rates of pay of their rank:—

Higher Rate of Pay

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL A. T. SLOGGETT, Royal Army Medical Corps.
VETERINARY-CAPTAIN G. R. GRIFFITH, D.S.O., Army Veterinary Department.

HONOURS AND PROMOTIONS FOR THE NILE EXPEDITION, 1898

(From the 'London Gazette,' November 15th, 1898)

WAR OFFICE, NOVEMBER 15TH, 1898

The Queen has been graciously pleased to confer the Decoration of the Royal Red Cross upon the undermentioned ladies, in recognition of their services in tending the sick and wounded in Egypt in connection with the recent operations in the Soudan:—

Royal Red Cross

MISS SARAH EMILY WEBB, Army Nursing Service.
MISS AMY FLORENCE GRIST, Army Nursing Service.
MISS ELIZABETH GEDDES, National Society for Aid to Sick and Wounded in War.

ADMIRALTY, NOVEMBER 14TH, 1898

The following promotions have been made in Her Majesty's Fleet for services in the gunboats employed on the Nile during

the recent operations in the Soudan, including the battles of Atbara and Khartoum, and will take effect from the 15th of November, 1898, viz. :—

Lieutenants :—

Admiralty Promotions

THE HONOURABLE HORACE LAMBERT ALEXANDER HOOD,
DAVID BEATTY, D.S.O.,

—to be Commanders.

The following officers will also be promoted for services during the operations named, viz. :—

COMMANDER COLIN RICHARD KEPPEL, D.S.O., to Captain on completing the necessary sea time to qualify him for that rank.

ENGINEER EDMUND EDWARD BOND to Chief Engineer on completing eight years' seniority in the former rank.

SUPPLEMENTARY LIST OF HONOURS AND PROMOTIONS FOR THE NILE EXPEDITION 1898, WITH THOSE ACCORDED **FOR THE OPERATIONS NEAR GEDAREF.**

(*From the 'London Gazette' of December 16th*, 1898)

WAR OFFICE, DECEMBER 16TH, 1898

The Queen has been graciously pleased to give orders for the following appointments to the Distinguished Service Order, and promotions in the Army, in recognition of the services of the undermentioned Officers during the recent operations in the Soudan :—

The promotions to bear date December 17th, 1898.

To be Companions of the Distinguished Service Order :—

D.S.O.

CAPTAIN CHARLES CHRISTIE FLEMING, M.B., Royal Army Medical Corps, employed with Egyptian Army.

LIEUTENANT GEORGE CLIFFORD MILLER HALL, Royal Engineers, employed with Egyptian Army.

LIEUTENANT FRANK HUNNARD, Army Service Corps.

To be Colonel :—

Brevet

MAJOR and BREVET-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL C. S. B. PARSONS, Royal Artillery, employed with Egyptian Army.

To be Lieutenant-Colonels :—

MAJOR H. M. LAWSON, Royal Engineers, employed with Egyptian Army.

MAJOR C. O. HORE, the South Staffordshire Regiment.

To be Majors :—

CAPTAIN THE HONOURABLE E. BARING, 10th Hussars, employed with Egyptian Army.

CAPTAIN O. H. PEDLEY, the Connaught Rangers, employed with Egyptian Army.

CAPTAIN E. B. WILKINSON, the Lincolnshire Regiment, employed with Egyptian Army.

CAPTAIN A. G. DWYER, the East Surrey Regiment, employed with Egyptian Army.

CAPTAIN E. G. T. BAINBRIDGE, the Buffs (East Kent Regiment).

ADDITIONAL NOTICE

The undermentioned officers are noted for consideration for the Brevet rank of Lieutenant-Colonel on promotion to the rank of Major :—

Brevet of Lieutenant-Colonel on Promotion to Major

CAPTAIN ST. G. C. HENRY, the Northumberland Fusileers, employed with Egyptian Army.

CAPTAIN A. DE S. MCKERRELL, the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders, employed with Egyptian Army.

FOR THE ACTION OF ROSAIRES

(*From the 'London Gazette' of June 30th*, 1899)

WAR OFFICE, JUNE 30TH, 1899

The Queen has been pleased to give orders for the following appointments to the Distinguished Service Order, and promotions in the Army, in recognition of the services of the undermentioned Officers during the recent operations in the Soudan (defeat of Ahmed Fedil's Army in the cataract south of Rosaires) :—

To be Companions of the Distinguished Service Order :—

D.S.O.

MAJOR and BREVET-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL FORTESCUE JOHN NASON, the Cameronians (Scottish Rifles), employed with Egyptian Army.

CAPTAIN JAMES WILLES JENNINGS, Royal Army Medical Corps, employed with Egyptian Army.

LIEUTENANT EDWARD PETER STRICKLAND, the Norfolk Regiment, employed with Egyptian Army.

To be Colonel :—

Brevet

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL D. F. LEWIS, C.B., employed with Egyptian Army.

To be Lieutenant-Colonel :—

MAJOR C. FERGUSSON, D.S.O., Grenadier Guards, employed with Egyptian Army.

To be Major :—

CAPTAIN SIR H. B. HILL, BART., Princess Victoria's (Royal Irish Fusileers), employed with Egyptian Army.

The promotions to bear date December 26th, 1898.

MEMORANDUM

The Queen has further been pleased to approve the grant of the Medal for Distinguished Conduct in the Field to the undermentioned soldiers :—

Distinguished Conduct Medal

SERGEANT J. C. LAMBERT, Royal Marine Artillery.
SERGEANT R. A. TROWBRIDGE, Royal Marine Artillery.

APPENDIX D

SOME EXTRACTS FROM A MEMORANDUM FOR GUIDANCE OF OFFICERS COMMANDING BRITISH INFANTRY IN THE SOUDAN

BRITISH INFANTRY IN THE SOUDAN

4. The unit will march fully equipped for service. All cloth and serge clothing (except great-coat and one suit of serge) and other articles not required will be carefully packed and stored by companies at the depôt. Clothing—uniform and under-clothing —should be the best available, and any deemed unfit for three months' hard work should at once be replaced in accordance with the Clothing Regulations. Spare buttons should be sown on the waistband of trousers, and the helmet band which fits the man's head should be inspected to see the stitching has not given way. Each man must have two good pairs of boots with heel and toe-plates. The boots should fit easily, as the feet swell in hot weather, and dubbin should be freely used.

5. As the soldier will never be required to carry his kit in the Soudan, and when troops are moving rapidly the soldier may be separated from his kit-bag for some days, a small canvas bag fastened by a cord will be issued in place of the valise, which will be left at the depôt. In this canvas bag articles usually carried in the valise will be securely packed. Each bag is to be clearly marked on the outside with owner's name and corps, and will be carried in sacks or in camel nets.

7. A small tin drinking-pot with handle, through which a strap can be passed, is an immense convenience, and in many units one is generally carried by each man.

8. Regimental cooks should, when possible, be mounted on donkeys. The men get in comparatively fresh, and can set to work at once over their kitchen fires.

9. Officers' kits should be as light and strong as possible and capable of division, as it may frequently occur that a very small allowance of baggage can accompany the troops, the remainder being forwarded as opportunity offers.

10. The same remark applies to mess property, and company Officers should be prepared to mess independently if necessary (on picquet or detached). Private camels should be secured as

early as possible for conveyance of mess property. Donkeys have been found most useful by Officers, as they can carry their things and enable their servants to be always at hand.

11. The Herbert Stewart *khaki* helmet of Egyptian Army pattern is by far the most suitable for wear in the Soudan, and is worn by nearly all Officers.

12. Canvas water-bottles to be carried over saddle-bags are invaluable, as they cool water better than anything. They are made in pairs fitted with leather slings, and can be obtained in Cairo.

14. The troops should be accustomed to make themselves as comfortable as possible at every camp, however short the stay may be.

Whenever halts are made during the day, shelter from the sun should be sought or improvised.

Excellent shelter can be made out of the new pattern blanket (with eyelet and lashings) by joining them together and stretching them over light sticks. The sticks in the first instance should be provided regimentally; they can, if lost, usually be replaced by cutting from the surrounding bush; cord will have to be carried for lashing the ridge poles and guys; pegs or a substitute would have to be provided.

The plaited leaves of the *dôm*-palm take the place of string in the Soudan, and the men should be taught to use them.

15. If 'tukuls'—shelters or huts made of grass—are used, arms, accoutrements, &c., must never be placed within 50 feet, as in case of fire it is impossible to save anything.

19. Too much attention cannot be devoted to supervision of food and drink. The water should always, when possible, be drawn from a running stream, well clear of pollution from the bank. Running water, however muddy, is preferable to a stagnant pool. A ready means of clearing the water is found in draining the water through *khaki* or cloth. In standing camps, or when there is an opportunity and time admits, water should be filtered or boiled. As regards food, the rations issued are ample, but they should as far as possible be supplemented with fresh vegetables and milk.

H. COOPER,
Colonel, Assistant Adjutant-General.

Headquarters, Cairo: June 3, 1898.

Scale of Rations

All British Officers, Warrant Officers, and men will draw rations daily according to the scale issued. Rations may also be drawn for native servants of Officers up to the numbers authorised in the Allowance Regulations, provided they are actually employed. Other native employees may also be supplied with rations, provided they are not employed in the vicinity of their village.

1. From the 1st of April 1898, the daily ration for each Officer and soldier will be—

Meat.—1¼ lbs. fresh or 1 lb. preserved, or authorised equivalents. Bacon, 4 oz. (when available) in lieu of 4 oz. fresh meat. Meat-tin openers will be drawn by regiments and corps from Army Ordnance Department.

Bread.—1½ lbs. bread or 1 lb. biscuits or flour, or authorised equivalents.

Groceries.—

Tea	½ oz.	
Coffee	½ „	(or cocoa-paste or navy chocolate, 1 oz.)
Sugar	3 „	
Salt	½ „	
Pepper	1·36 „	

Jam or marmalade once a-week (when available), ¼ lb. tin.

Rations of groceries will be issued at an hour which will enable troops marching during the night or early morning, or who are under arms before daybreak, to have a cup of tea or coffee before starting, and to carry ½ lb. of bread or biscuit in their haversacks.

Vegetables.—Fresh, 1 lb. when procurable, or 3 oz. beans, or 1 oz. preserved vegetables, or 1 oz. dried onions; rice, ½ oz.

Spirits.— $\frac{1}{64}$th of a gallon of rum (if available). Only to be issued under very exceptional circumstances, and in no case without the sanction of the General Officer Commanding.

Lime-juice.— $\frac{1}{320}$th of a gallon when considered necessary by Medical Officer.

Fuel.—1 lb. of coal or 2 lbs. of wood, to be the maximum quantity issued daily in camp, to be reduced to 1 lb. of wood on the march, and then only when not obtainable by the troops themselves.

Gillas (dry dung-cakes) is a very good substitute for fuel when wood or coal is not available. 1 lb. gillas is equal to 2 lbs. of wood, but some wood should always be issued with them for kindling purposes.

Light.—Hospitals, as required. Guards, horse pickets, Officers and offices, one candle per night for each. One candle per night for every 12 soldiers in hut or standing camp only. When oil is issued, one gill will be considered as a substitute for each candle.

2. The daily ration of forage will be—

	For each horse	For each mule
Barley	8 lbs.	5½ lbs.
Chopped straw	10 „	9 „
Bran	2¼ „	—
Crushed beans	—	3 „
Salt (when available)	1 oz.	—

When chopped straw is not available, green forage or bran, or both, may be issued in lieu, at the following equivalents:—2 lbs. chopped straw, 6 lbs. green forage, 1⅛ lbs. bran. The usual equivalents may be drawn when supplies are plentiful.

3. The daily ration for natives, when an E.A. ration is not issued to them, will be—

Bread, biscuit, or flour	1 lb.
Meat, fresh or preserved	½ „
Coffee or tea	⅓ oz.
Sugar	2 „
Salt	½ „

APPENDIX E

TEXT OF THE SOUDAN AGREEMENT OF THE 19TH OF JANUARY, 1899, AND OF THE DECLARATION OF THE 21ST OF MARCH, 1899

AGREEMENT BETWEEN HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT OF HIS HIGHNESS THE KHEDIVE OF EGYPT, RELATIVE TO THE FUTURE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SOUDAN

WHEREAS certain provinces in the Soudan which were in rebellion against the authority of His Highness the Khedive have now been reconquered by the joint military and financial efforts of Her Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of His Highness the Khedive;

AND whereas it has become necessary to decide upon a system for the administration of and for the making of laws for the said reconquered provinces, under which due allowance may be made for the backward and unsettled condition of large portions thereof, and for the varying requirements of different localities;

AND whereas it is desired to give effect to the claims which have accrued to Her Britannic Majesty's Government, by right of conquest, to share in the present settlement and future working and developement of the said system of administration and legislation;

AND whereas it is conceived that for many purposes Wady Halfa and Suakin may be most effectively administered in conjunction with the reconquered provinces to which they are respectively adjacent;

Now, it is hereby agreed and declared by and between the Undersigned, duly authorised for that purpose, as follows:—

ART. I.

The word 'Soudan' in this Agreement means all the territories South of the 22nd parallel of latitude, which:

1. Have never been evacuated by Egyptian troops since the year 1882; or

2. Which having before the late rebellion in the Soudan been administered by the Government of His Highness the Khedive,

were temporarily lost to Egypt, and have been reconquered by Her Majesty's Government and the Egyptian Government, acting in concert; or

3. Which may hereafter be reconquered by the two Governments acting in concert.

ART. II.

The British and Egyptian flags shall be used together, both on land and water, throughout the Soudan, except in the town of Suakin, in which locality the Egyptian flag alone shall be used.

ART. III.

The supreme military and civil command in the Soudan shall be vested in one officer, termed the 'Governor-General of the Soudan.' He shall be appointed by Khedivial Decree on the recommendation of Her Britannic Majesty's Government, and shall be removed only by Khedivial Decree, with the consent of Her Britannic Majesty's Government.

ART. IV.

Laws, as also Orders and Regulations with the full force of law, for the good government of the Soudan, and for regulating the holding, disposal, and devolution of property of every kind therein situate, may from time to time be made, altered, or abrogated by Proclamation of the Governor-General. Such Laws, Orders, and Regulations may apply to the whole or any named part of the Soudan, and may, either explicitly or by necessary implication, alter or abrogate any existing Law or Regulation.

All such Proclamations shall be forthwith notified to Her Britannic Majesty's Agent and Consul-General in Cairo, and to the President of the Council of Ministers of His Highness the Khedive.

ART. V.

No Egyptian Law, Decree, Ministerial Arrêté, or other enactment hereafter to be made or promulgated shall apply to the Soudan or any part thereof, save in so far as the same shall be applied by Proclamation of the Governor-General in manner hereinbefore provided.

ART. VI.

In the definition by Proclamation of the conditions under which Europeans, of whatever nationality, shall be at liberty to

trade with or reside in the Soudan, or to hold property within its limits, no special privileges shall be accorded to the subjects of any one or more Power.

ART. VII.

Import duties on entering the Soudan shall not be payable on goods coming from Egyptian territory. Such duties may, however, be levied on goods coming from elsewhere than Egyptian territory; but in the case of goods entering the Soudan at Suakin, or any other port on the Red Sea Littoral, they shall not exceed the corresponding duties for the time being leviable on goods entering Egypt from abroad. Duties may be levied on goods leaving the Soudan, at such rates as may from time to time be prescribed by Proclamation.

ART. VIII.

The jurisdiction of the Mixed Tribunals shall not extend, nor be recognised for any purpose whatsoever, in any part of the Soudan, except in the town of Suakin.

ART. IX.

Until, and save so far as it shall be otherwise determined by Proclamation, the Soudan, with the exception of the town of Suakin, shall be and remain under martial law.

ART. X.

No Consuls, Vice-Consuls, or Consular Agents shall be accredited in respect of nor allowed to reside in the Soudan, without the previous consent of Her Britannic Majesty's Government.

ART. XI.

The importation of slaves into the Soudan, as also their exportation, is absolutely prohibited. Provision shall be made by Proclamation for the enforcement of this Regulation.

ART. XII.

It is agreed between the two Governments that special attention shall be paid to the enforcement of the Brussels Act of the 2nd of July, 1890, in respect to the import, sale, and manufacture of fire-arms and their munitions, and distilled or spirituous liquors.

Done in Cairo, the 19th of January, 1899.

Signed: BOURTROS GHALI — CROMER.

DECLARATION RELATIVE TO THE BRITISH AND FRENCH SPHERES OF INFLUENCE IN CENTRAL AFRICA.

(*Signed at London, March 21st*, 1898)

THE Undersigned, duly authorised by their Governments, have signed the following declaration :—

The IVth Article of the Convention of the 14th of June, 1898, shall be completed by the following provisions, which shall be considered as forming an integral part of it:

1. Her Britannic Majesty's Government engages not to acquire either territory or political influence to the west of the line of frontier defined in the following paragraph, and the Government of the French Republic engages not to acquire either territory or political influence to the east of the same line.

2. The line of frontier shall start from the point where the boundary between the Congo Free State and French territory meets the water-parting between the watershed of the Nile and that of the Congo and its affluents. It shall follow in principle that water-parting up to its intersection with the 11th parallel of north latitude. From this point it shall be drawn as far as the 15th parallel in such manner as to separate, in principle, the Kingdom of Wadai from what constituted in 1882 the Province of Darfur; but it shall in no case be so drawn as to pass to the west beyond the 21st degree of longitude east of Greenwich (18° 40′ east of Paris), or to the east beyond the 23rd degree of longitude east of Greenwich (20° 40′ east of Paris).

3. It is understood, in principle, that to the north of the 15th parallel the French zone shall be limited to the north-east and east by a line which shall start from the point of intersection of the Tropic of Cancer with the 16th degree of longitude east of Greenwich (13° 40′ east of Paris), shall run thence to the south-east until it meets the 24th degree of longitude east of Greenwich (21° 40′ east of Paris), and shall then follow the 24th degree until it meets, to the north of the 15th parallel of latitude, the frontier of Darfur as it shall eventually be fixed.

4. The two Governments engage to appoint Commissioners who shall be charged to delimit on the spot a frontier-line in accordance with the indications given in paragraph 2 of this

Declaration. The result of their work shall be submitted for the approbation of their respective Governments.

It is agreed that the provisions of Article IX. of the Convention of the 14th of June, 1898, shall apply equally to the territories situated to the south of the 14° 20′ parallel of north latitude, and to the north of the 5th parallel of north latitude, between the 14° 20′ meridian of longitude east of Greenwich (12th degree east of Paris) and the course of the Upper Nile.

Done at London, the 21st of March, 1899.

(L.S.) SALISBURY.
(L.S.) PAUL CAMBON.

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